

UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE

(Manasagangotri Campus, Mysuru-570006)

“AMARAVATI STUPA”

A Dissertation Report Submitted to University of Mysore in partial fulfillment
for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Ancient History & Archaeology

SUBMITTED BY

PRAJWAL R C

M.A. IV Semester

Register No.: **P01ZZ22A007026**

Department of Studies in Ancient History & Archaeology
Manasagangotri, Mysuru

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

Dr. V SHOBHA

Associate Professor

Department of Studies in Ancient History & Archaeology
Manasagangotri, Mysuru

DEPARTMENT OF STUDIES IN ANCIENT HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY
MANASAGANGOTRI, MYSURU-570006

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work contained in the dissertation entitled **“AMARAVATI STUPA”** submitted by **PRAJWAL R C** (Register No.: **P01ZZ22A007026**) in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Ancient History & Archaeology to the University of Mysore, is a record of bonified work carried out by the student under my supervision and guidance during the Academic year 2023-24. The materials obtained from various sources have been acknowledged in this dissertation.

Place :

Date :

Chairperson

Dr. V SHOBHA

Guide

Dr. V SHOBHA

PRAJWAL R C

DECLARATION

I **PRAJWAL R C** (Register No.: **P01ZZ22A007026**) hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **“AMARAVATI STUPA”** submitted to the University of Mysore in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Ancient History & Archaeology, is a record of my original work under the guidance of Dr. V Shobha at Department of studies in Ancient History & Archaeology, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysuru.

This dissertation has not been previously submitted in part or full to this University or any other University for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, or other similar titles of recognition.

Place :

Date :

PRAJWAL R C

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CHAPTER - 01

BUDDHISM IN INDIA - A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION :

Buddhism also known as Buddha Dharma and Dharmavinaya, is an Indian religion and philosophical tradition based teachings attributed to the Buddha, a great teacher who lived in 6th or 5th century BCE. The history of Buddhism can be traced back to the 5th century BCE. Buddhism arose in Ancient India, in and around the Ancient Kingdom of Magadha and is based on the teachings of the renunciate Siddhartha Gautama.

The Early Buddhist texts contain no continuous life of the Buddha, only later after 200 BCE were various “*Biographies*” with much Mythological embellishment written. All text agree however that Gautama renounced the householder life and lived as a Sramana ascetic for some time studying under various teachers. For the remaining 45 years of his life, he travelled the Gangetic plains of Eastern-Central India, teaching his doctrine to a diverse range of people from different castes and initiating monks into his order. The Buddha sent his disciples to spread the Teachings across India. He also initiated an order of Nuns and urged his disciples to teach in the local language. He spent a lot of his time near the cities of Savatti, Rajagriha and Vesali. After the death of the Buddha at the age of 80 the Sangha remained centred on the Ganges valley.

During the reign of the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka, the Buddhist community split into two branches: *the Mahāsāṃghika* and *the Sthaviravāda*, each of which spread throughout India and split into numerous sub-sects. In modern times, two major branches of Buddhism exist: *the Theravada* in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, and the *Mahayana* throughout the Himalayas and East Asia. The Buddhist tradition of *Vajrayana* is sometimes classified as a part of Mahayana Buddhism, but some scholars consider it to be a different branch altogether.

The practice of Buddhism lost influence in India around the 7th century CE, after the collapse of the Gupta Empire. The last large state to support Buddhism—the Pala Empire—fell in the 12th century. By the

end of the 12th century, Buddhism had largely disappeared from India with the exception of the Himalayan region and isolated remnants in parts of south India. However, since the 19th century, modern revivals of Buddhism have included the Maha Bodhi Society, the Vipassana movement, and the Dalit Buddhist movement spearheaded by B. R. Ambedkar. There has also been a growth in Tibetan Buddhism with the arrival of Tibetan refugees and the Tibetan government in exile to India, following the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950.

1.2. EARLY BUDDHIST COUNCILS :

The Buddha did not appoint any successor, and asked his followers to work toward liberation following the instructions he had left. The teachings of the Buddha existed only in oral traditions. The Sangha held a number of Buddhist councils in order to reach consensus on matters of Buddhist doctrine and practice.

1. *Mahākāśyapa*, a disciple of the Buddha, presided over **The First Buddhist council** held at Rājagṛha (483 BCE). Its purpose was to recite and agree on the Buddha's actual teachings and on monastic discipline. Some scholars consider this council fictitious.
2. **The Second Buddhist Council** is said to have taken place at Vaiśālī (383 BCE). Its purpose was to deal with questionable monastic practices like the use of money, the drinking of palm wine, and other irregularities; the council declared these practices unlawful.
3. What is commonly called **The Third Buddhist Council** was held at Pāṭaliputra, and was allegedly called by Emperor Aśoka in the 250 BC. Organized by the monk *Moggaliputta Tissa*, it was held in order to rid the sangha of the large number of monks who had joined the order because of its royal patronage. Most scholars now believe this council was exclusively Theravada, and that the dispatch of missionaries to various countries at about this time had nothing to do with it.
4. What is often called **The Fourth Buddhist council** is generally believed to have been held under the patronage of Emperor Kaniṣka in Kashmir (102 CE), though the late Monseigneur Professor Lamotte considered it fictitious. It is generally believed to have been a council of the *Sarvastivāda* school.

1.3. EARLY BUDDHIST SCHOOLS :

The Early Buddhist Schools were the various schools in which pre-sectarian Buddhism split in the first few centuries after the passing away of the Buddha (in about the 5th century BC). The earliest division was between the majority *Mahāsāṃghika* and the minority *Sthaviravāda*. Some existing Buddhist traditions follow the vinayas of early Buddhist schools.

- **Theravāda:** practised mainly in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Bangladesh.
- **Dharmaguptaka:** followed in China, Korea, Vietnam, and Taiwan.
- **Mūlasarvāstivāda:** followed in Tibetan Buddhism.

The Dharmaguptakas made more efforts than any other sect to spread Buddhism outside India, to areas such as Afghanistan, Central Asia, and China, and they had great success in doing so. Therefore, most countries which adopted Buddhism from China, also adopted the Dharmaguptaka vinaya and ordination lineage for bhikṣus and bhikṣuṇīs.

During the early period of Chinese Buddhism, the Indian Buddhist sects recognized as important, and whose texts were studied, were the *Dharmaguptakas*, *Mahīśāsakas*, *Kāśyapīyas*, *Sarvāstivādins*, and the *Mahāsāṃghikas*. Complete vinayas preserved in the Chinese Buddhist canon include the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, *Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya*, *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*, and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*. Also preserved are a set of Āgamas (Sūtra Piṭaka), a complete Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma Piṭaka, and many other texts of the early Buddhist schools.

Early Buddhist schools in India often divided modes of Buddhist practice into several "vehicles" (*yāna*). For example, the Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins are known to have employed the outlook of Buddhist practice as consisting of the Three Vehicles:

1. Śrāvakayāna
2. Pratyekabuddhayāna
3. Bodhisattvayāna

Mahayana:

The Great Chaitya in the Karla Caves, Maharashtra. The structure dates back to the 2nd century AD.

Several scholars have suggested that the Prajnaparamita sutras, which are among the earliest Mahayana sutras, developed among the Mahasamghika along the Krishna River in the Andhra region of South India.

The earliest Mahayana sūtras to include the first versions of the Prajnaparamita genre, along with texts concerning Akṣobhya Buddha, which were probably written down in the 1st century BC in the south of India. Guang Xing states, "Several scholars have suggested that the Prajñāpāramitā probably developed among the Mahāsāṃghikas in southern India, in the Āndhra country, on the Kṛṣṇa River." A.K. Warder believes that "the Mahayana originated in the south of India and almost certainly in the Āndhra country."

Anthony Barber and Sree Padma note that "historians of Buddhist thought have been aware for quite some time that such pivotally important Mahayana Buddhist thinkers as Nagarjuna, Dignaga, Candrakirti, Aryadeva, and Bhavaviveka, among many others, formulated their theories while living in Buddhist communities in Āndhra." They note that the ancient Buddhist sites in the lower Kṛṣṇa Valley, including Amaravati Stupa, Nagarjunakonda and Jaggayyapeta" can be traced to at least the third century BCE, if not earlier." Akira Hirakawa notes the "evidence suggests that many Early Mahayana scriptures originated in South India."

Vajrayana:

Various classes of Vajrayana literature developed as a result of royal courts sponsoring both Buddhism and Shaivism. The Mañjusrimulakalpa, which later came to be classified under Kriyatantra, states that mantras taught in the Shaiva, Garuda and Vaishnava tantras will be effective if applied by Buddhists since they were all taught originally by Manjushri. The Guhyasiddhi of Padmavajra, a work associated with the Guhyasamaja tradition, prescribes acting as a Shaiva guru and initiating members into Shaiva Siddhanta scriptures and mandalas. The Samvara tantra texts adopted the pitha list from the Shaiva text *Tantrasadbhava*, introducing a copying error where a deity was mistaken for a place.

1.4. THE EARLY SPREAD OF BUDDHISM :

In the sixth and fifth centuries BC, economic development made the merchant class increasingly important. Merchants were attracted to

Buddhist teachings, which contrasted with existing Brahmin religious practice. The latter focussed on the social position of the Brahmin caste to the exclusion of the interests of other classes. Buddhism became prominent in merchant communities and then spread throughout the Mauryan empire through commercial connections and along trade routes. In this way, Buddhism also spread through the silk route into central Asia.

The Mauryan Empire & Ashoka:

The Mauryan Empire reached its peak at the time of emperor Ashoka, who converted to Buddhism after the Battle of Kalinga. This heralded a long period of stability under the Buddhist emperor. The power of the empire was vast—ambassadors were sent to other countries to propagate Buddhism. Greek envoy Megasthenes describes the wealth of the Mauryan capital. Stupas, pillars, and edicts on stone remain at Sanchi, Sarnath, and Mathura, indicating the extent of the empire.

Emperor Ashoka the Great (304 BC–232 BC) was the ruler of the Mauryan Empire from 273 BC to 232 BC. Ashoka reigned over most of India after a series of military campaigns. Emperor Ashoka's kingdom stretched from South Asia and beyond, from present-day parts of Afghanistan in the north and Balochistan in the west, to Bengal and Assam in the east, and as far south as Mysore.

After Asoka ascended the throne, he came in contact with the Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa (called Upagupta in Sanskrit Literature), and had long Dhamma discussions with him from time to time. Thus slowly but steadily he was drawn to the Buddha's teachings. Asoka was finally and firmly converted to Buddhism after witnessing the misery and suffering unleashed by the Kalinga war. Asoka's change of heart thereafter was sudden and dramatic.

Measures adopted for the spread of Buddhism:

Asoka was responsible for the spread of Buddhism not only in India but also outside India. He took many measures for the spread of Buddhism. They are as follows:

1. He visited the Buddhist holy places such as Lumbini Garden, Kapilavastu, Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar and arranged discourses on religion.

2. He built a large number of monasteries all over the empire and spent large sums of money in endowing them.
3. He spread the doctrines of Buddha by engraving them on rocks, pillars and on the walls of the caves throughout the vast empire.
4. He appointed officers called Dharmamahathras, Yukthas and Rajjukas to spread Dharma among the people. He also appointed Sthree Adhyaksha Mahamatra to take care of women and bring religion awareness among them.
5. He organised the 3rd Buddhist Council at Pataliputra in 250 BCE to settle the internal differences among the monks under leadership of Moggaliputta Tissa.
6. Asoka sent Missionaries to preach Buddhism in Afghanistan, Burma, Srilanka, and Europe. He sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamithra to Srilanka with a Bodhi sapling as a symbol of peace.
7. He Undertook many welfare activities. He dug wells, built rest houses, planted fruit bearing trees along road sides, constructed hospitals for men and animals and established schools. He made arrangement to feed the poor and physically unfit people. He was like a father to his subjects. His motto was '*Service and Sacrifice*.'

The Shunga dynasty (185-73 BCE) was established about 50 years after Ashoka's death. Buddhist religious scriptures such as the Asokavadana says that, "Pushyamithra Shunga destroyed hundreds of monasteries and killed hundreds of thousands of innocent monks, 84,000 Buddhist stupas which had been built by Asoka were destroyed and 100 gold coins were offered for the head of each Buddhist monk."

Buddhism flourished under the Indo-Greek and Greco-Bactrian kings. One of the most famous Indo-Greek kings is Menander (160-135 BCE). He may have converted to Buddhism under the influence of Nagasena and is presented in the Mahayana tradition as one of the great benefactors of the faith.

The Kushana empire (30-375 BCE) was formed in the 1st Century BCE. They adopted elements of the Hellenistic culture of Bactria and the Indo-Greeks. During Kushana rule Gandharan Buddhism was at the height of its influence. Emperor Kanishka is particularly known for his support of Buddhism. During his reign, stupas and Monastries were built in the Gandharan city Purushapura. He conducted the 4th Buddhist

Council at Kundalavana in Kashmir in 102 CE to settle the disputed existing in Buddhism at that time which was presided by Vasumitra.

Buddhism continued to flourish in India during the Gupta empire (4th-6th century AD). Gupta ruler such as Kumaragupta-I (414-455 AD) supported Buddhism. He enlarged Nalanda University which became the largest and most influential Buddhist University in India for many centuries. Chines traveller Huien Tsang complimented the patronage of emperor Harshavardhana (590-647 CE) to Buddhism. He also mentions that in various regions Buddhism was giving way to Jainism and Hinduism.

After the fall Harsha's empire the Pala's supported Buddhism and built several important Buddhist centres, such as Vikramashila, Somapura and Odantapuri. They also supported older centers like Nalanda & Bodh Gaya. It was at these great Buddhist centres that scholars developed the philosophies of Vajrayana, Abhidhamma, Madhyamaka, Yogachara under the Palas, Vajrayana Buddhism spread to Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim.

Decline of Buddhism in India:

The 11th century Persian traveller Al-Biruni writes that there was 'cordial hatred' between the *Brahmins* and *Sramana* Buddhists. Buddhism was also weakened by rival Hindu philosophies such as Advaita Vedanta, growth in temples and an innovation of the Bhakti movement. This rivalry undercut Buddhist patronage and popular support. The period between 400 CE and 1000 CE thus saw gains by the Vedanta school of Hinduism over Buddhism.

A milestone in the Decline of Indian Buddhism in the North occurred in 1193 CE when Turkic Islamic raiders under Muhammad Khilji burnt Nalanda. By the end of the 12th century, following the Islamic conquest of the Buddhist strongholds in Bihar and Bengal by Delhi Sultanate's Muhammad-bin-Bhakhtiyar Khilji, and the loss of political support coupled with social pressures, the practice of Buddhism retreated to the Himalayan foothills in the North and Sri Lanka in the South.

1.5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Several scholars and Researchers have dedicated their work to studying the Amaravati Stupa, its History, Architecture and Cultural Significance. While this is not an exhaustive list, here are a few notable scholars and authors whose work has contributed to our understanding of Amaravati Stupa and its Antiquities.

- a. **H.SARKAR & S.P NAINAR** : They are renowned scholars and authors who co-authored the work '*Amaravati*', which is like a handbook to study about Amaravati Stupa. In this book they gave information of Historical Background, Development of Stupa at different periods or phases, Sculptural Art of Amaravati School, Archaeological Site Museum at Amaravati.
- b. **JAS. BURGESS** : He is a British Archaeologist who Excavated the Buddhist sites of Amaravati & Jaggayyapeta. In his work '*Buddhist Stupas in Amaravati & Jaggayyapeta*', he gave information of the Antiquities recovered during Excavation, Dimension & Size of the Stupa, information of the previous Research works and Inscriptions of Amaravati.
- c. **C. SIVARAMAMURTI** : He was an Indian Museologist, Art Historian & Epigraphist. In his work '*Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum*', he gave details of the Sculptures of the Amaravati with their time period. No other work gives such vast information of Sculptures of Amaravati like his book.
- d. **SREYASHI RAY CHAUDHURI** : He is a Researcher in University of Calcutta. In his thesis '*Amaravati Art in the context of Andhra Archaeology*', he gave information of Buddhist Art & Architecture in Andhra Pradesh with special reference to Amaravati Art, Inscription, Sculptural & Narrative Art with their description and Impact of Amaravati Art on India, Sri Lanka & South East Asian Art.
- e. **Dr. T.S.SRIDHAR & R BALASUBRAMANIAN** : They are the renowned scholars who co-authored the work '*Guide to the Refurbished Amaravati Gallery*'. In this work they gave brief information of the Sculptures of Amaravati with their time period & description.

1.6. OBJECTIVES :

- a. To know about the Historical & Architectural significance of Amaravati
- b. To analyse the Architectural design & construction techniques used in the Stupa
- c. To study the layout, dimensions and structural elements of the Stupa, including the dome, drum and gateways
- d. To examine the sculptural art and carvings on the Stupa
- e. To know about the Influence and spread of Buddhism in South India
- f. To study the Amaravati School of Art which is one of the three major School of Art in India, the others were Gandhara & Mathura

1.7. METHODOLOGY :

The analysis of both literary and archaeological sources extensively to check the validity of corroboration between them is very important for enriching data. The methodology it becomes essential to undertake visual survey of Art centres, Museums and Exhibitions for a better understanding of the stylistic uniqueness, correlation between the sites and the chronological attribution of the antiquities drawn from the 'Amarāvātī School'.

To complete the objectives mentioned above the following methods have been followed in the present work :

- a. An Exploration or Field study was carried out to study the layout, dimensions and structural elements of the Stupa Site
- b. For documentation work Photography, Collection of data of Sculptures from the available sources in the Museum method was followed
- c. Visited Museum to study about the Artefacts such as Pottery, Tools, Coins, and Religious Relics uncovered during excavations
- d. Documentation of Stupa with Photography, Maps & Plan Drawing
- e. For Archaeological, Historical, Art and Textual analysis the data is collected from both Primary and Secondary sources such as Previous works on Amaravati Stupa, Journals, Published works, Articles, Archives, information from websites, ASI publications

1.8. CHAPTERIZATION :

To study the Archaeological, Socio-cultural, Architectural History of Amaravati Stupa, I have divided entire work into 7 chapters :

First chapter is the Introduction part of Buddhism in India, different schools, Royal Patronage, Buddhist councils, spread of Buddhism to the different parts of world.

In **Chapter Two**, I have given details about origin & development of Buddhist Architecture and its features. Here, I discussed about development of Rock-cut & Structural Architecture such as Chaithyas, Viharas and Stupas.

Chapter Three discusses about the Buddhist Architecture in South India, especially in Andhra Pradesh. In this chapter I have given a short note on important Buddhist sites in Andhra Pradesh including Amaravati & Nagarjunakonda.

Chapter Four is the Main topic i.e about the Amaravati Stupa. This chapter gives details of the previous excavation & exploration work carried out at Amaravati, Historical background, development of Stupa and Sculptural Art & Architecture at different phases.

In **Fifth Chapter**, I have given the information of important Artefacts, Sculptures, Antiquities, Inscriptions that are preserved in Archaeological site Museum at Amaravati.

The **Sixth Chapter** deals with the Amaravati Inscription. I have mentioned some important Inscription that are discovered in Amaravati. The Inscriptions of Amaravati are of different types – some of them mentions the names of Architectural features of Stupa, names of Kings, Royal Patrons, Monks & Nuns, Donors, different Social groups, Places, Gifts, Contribution, Repairs & Renovations work made to the Stupa.

In the last and **Seventh chapter**, I have summarised my entire work with conclusion. At last, I have mentioned the sources that I used and attached images of Maps, Plan Drawing, different Sculptures, Stupa site, Dome slab, Drum slab, Narrative scenes etc.

CHAPTER - 02

ORIGIN & DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

2.1. BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE :

The architecture which is the manifestation of the Buddhas' Teachings in the concrete form is Buddhist architecture. Many features, forms, spaces designed are distinct and specific in structures developed with philosophy of Buddha making the architecture Buddhist.

2.2. FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE:

- **Buddhist architecture is totally religious: -**

The great architecture Buddhism has produced shows that it was never a religion confined to dogmas or rituals bounded by static forms, but shows growth and continuous progress, through its different architectural elements.

- **Buddhist architecture is symbolical: -**

Buddhist architecture has to be understood from the context of the teachings, the philosophy, the practical application of the philosophical teachings, which manifests on your 'own' experience. The forms and the shapes used in the architecture are the symbolic representation of the teachings, like a *stūpa* in Buddhism is not just a monument but it is Buddha and enlightenment itself.

- **Buddhist architecture is transcendental :-**

It goes beyond the mere practical purpose and touches the unconsciousness of the mind. The *chetiya* is so designed, so as to be useful for meditation.

- **Continuity is seen in the development of Buddhist architecture throughout the centuries :-**

The spread of Buddhism throughout the country and the new architecture coming out for the fulfilment, was carried out for centuries together, from generation to generation.

- **Buddhist architecture is foremost of the people, by the people and for the people :-**

Buddhist architecture clearly gives a message, it shows how it has sublimated through the bindings of structures and developed into a culture, reaching the lowest strata of the society, where even the commonest folk, following and experiencing the truth of the teachings.

2.3. CLASSIFICATION OF BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE :

Buddhist architecture is thus religious in character and *Stupa*, *Vihara* and *Chetiyaghara* are the main structures which represent it.

According to the geography and the material of construction the Buddhist architecture of India can be broadly classified into two:

1. Structural architecture and
2. Rock-cut architecture

1. STRUCTURAL ARCHITECTURE is the one which is constructed or built from the material like mud, stone and bricks. Such architecture is regularly seen in the north and south India. Mostly the remains of the *stupas*, *chetiyaghara*s and *viharas* [only the foundations] are found as the material is easily destructible with time.

2. ROCK-CUT ARCHITECTURE is the architecture which is cut or excavated in the rock or mountain. There are about 1500 rock-cut excavations in India and out of them 1200 are in Maharashtra of which 1000 are Buddhist. These large numbers of Buddhist rock-cut excavations in Maharashtra are due to the Sahyadri mountain range running north-south dividing Maharashtra into Konkan and Deccan Pathar. They are dated from 2nd BCE to about 11th CE scattered in large and small 40 groups, broadly classified into Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

2.4. STRUCTURAL ARCHITECTURE :

(i) STUPA :

Stupa is the monumental structure adopted in Buddhist architecture, which has a pre-historic origin in burial mounds. Stupas were built over the remains of the dead even in pre-buddhist times, but

they were built outside the villages. When Buddha asked to build stupa on the remains of the enlightened ones, he was specific about that they should be built at the crossroads of the village and has to be worshipped with flowers. Thus stupa no longer remained a structure associated with death outside the village but became the place of worship and also the symbol of Buddha and enlightenment. With the development in material and technology of construction, the stupa underwent considerable changes. The development in the philosophy of Buddhism as per the different schools is also reflected the changed stupa architecture. *Emperor Asoka* was a great patron of Buddhism and it is said that he built 84000 stupas. Archaeological evidences prove that most of the earlier stupas have Mauryan origin or are renovated by Emperor Asoka.

The Chinese traveller *Fa-hien* speaks of the alms bowl of the Buddha which he saw at Peshawar. *Huen Tsang* speaks of head-dresses of prince Siddhartha associating them with the vihara at Konkanpura in South India. There are places where it is believed that Buddha has left his foot prints for faithful to worship. Sanctuaries of different kinds have arisen in all such places. Apart from this it can throw light on history of origin and development of Art and Architecture of ancient India. The stupa architecture also reflects the technological development and the material of construction of the period. With time the stupa not only became the symbolic form of *the mahaparinibbana* of the Buddha but also the symbolic form of the Buddha himself, his Dhamma [teachings] and his *Abhidhamma* [higher teachings]. Thus, the study of the evolution of the stupa reveals the changing phases of Buddhism through time.

Origin of the Stupa :

The stupa can be traced back to the funerary structure of the primitives. Circles of stone to mark the spot of burial are the precursors of the low mound which developed into the mighty stupas of a later age. Fergusson has a picture of the circles of stone which he saw in numbers in pile-historic sites near Amaravati and he traces back the stupa to this primitive sepulchre (Burgess, p. 23). The earliest form of stupa in the pre- Buddhistic period is the low mound encircled by a series of stones. These megaliths were sometimes so arranged as to leave a circumambulatory passage between the low tumulus and the enclosure stones. The tumuli were of two kinds. Some were provided with a vault for the relics in earthen vessels. There were others that lacked this

chamber. In such cases the remains were simply covered with earth, a large slab placed over the mass and the whole covered up by the tumulus raised over it. The primitive custom of preserving the remains of the departed in an urn kept in the vault under the tumulus is seen even in the stupa where the reliquary is safely stowed away in a chamber situated usually in the centre. A fine picture of the section plan of the stupa, showing this arrangement of relic preservation is given by Rea.

Development of the Stupa and its parts :

The earliest stupas such as we see in the carvings at Bharhut and Sanchi, were very simple in structure. They were not built and decorated so elaborately or on such a huge scale as some of the famous stupas with which we are more familiar. Stupas erected during the time of Asoka were simple structures of brick and plaster surrounded by a wooden rail with open gateways facing the cardinal points. To illustrate this point M. Longhurst has chosen the Andher stupa, described by General Cunningham in his Bhilsa Topes, on account of the tolerable certainty of its age ascertained from the inscription of the steatite reliquary which mentions the relics of Haritiputra a Buddhist teacher and contemporary of Asoka.

There are descriptions in early Buddhist literature of people purchasing flowers to be offered at stupas for decorating them. Such a description applies only to the smaller early stupas which had pegs at intervals all around the drum at a particular height. The stupas being sufficiently low and comparatively small could well be decorated by pious worshippers with festoons and garlands of fresh flowers which were supported by the pegs - This later on developed into a conventional representations of the festoons in plaster work over the edifice and the pegs that were then superfluous became in their turn purely ornamental, and lingered on as well-carved discs of exaggerated size. The rail in its primitive form was a simple fencing made of wood and the later copy in stone of the wooden structure which is so heavy and laborious speaks eloquently of its origin. The elaborate rail with decorations carved on it came later, the gateways at the cardinal points being special ornamental features.

The *Harmika* or the box-shaped construction above the stupa which bore on its crown the umbrellas, has now to be reconstructed from imagination. Even at Sanchi, one of the best preserved of stupas, it has disappeared. But bas reliefs of the stupa on slabs give us a good idea of

it. This superfluous addition could not have existed in the very early stupas. There are representations of stupas of the early types lacking the harmika and the umbrella. The outline of the harmika marked at a higher level the position of the chamber enshrining the reliquary.

The umbrellas increased in course of time into an indefinite number and are shown in the sculptures as fixed in various ways. Sometimes they are conventionally strained into fantastic curves in a most unnatural way on either side. Sometimes they form a canopy over the stupa. Miniature representations of the stupa like the one from Nagarjunakonda.

The *drum* of the stupa also underwent change, the circular structure of the earlier period making way for a square one. The *vedika* or circular platform with cordial projections approached by steps leading to them disappeared and for the first time images of Buddha were introduced into niches on each side. The drum was no longer low ; the height being considerably increased and the *anda* or the cup-shaped part instead of retaining its primitive semi-circular contour bulging out above the drum. This bulging is found even in the rockcut stupas at Kanheri.

The evolution of the *torana* (gateway) is equally interesting. The earliest type is found at Amaravati and was still the fashion even during the days of Nagarjuna as is evident from its representation in the sculptural pictures of the stupa. The early gateway, if we remember the verse of Kalidasa '*srenibandhan vitanvadbhirastambham toranasrajam,*' is but a pair of *stambhas* or pillars to which were tied the two ends of a tarana wreath- The earlier *torana stambhas* must have had fresh torana wreaths tied to them every day. Later, heavy stone- work took the place of wreaths. The decoration of the stupa with fresh flowers and the torana pillars with flower or leaf garlands gave place, in all probability, to structural representations and modifications of the original almost about the same period.

The earliest surviving gateway is the one at Bharhut where the numerous miniature caryatids coming between the curved bars of the torana suggest that they might have been evolved from fresh mango leaves hanging from a string. This torana of fresh mango leaves continues to be a feature in every Hindu house on festive occasions. The leaves may have been worked in the earlier stages in a natural way and later on modified into ornamentations and sculptures of caryatids

and miniature pillars which slowly obliterated the original forms. The significance of these small parts of the torana which is already obscure at Bharhut seems to have been completely forgotten and ignored by the sculptors responsible for the toranas at Sanchi where they are not so numerous but appear to have been retained to observe a custom or tradition. The primitive torana has however survived at Amaravati where the sculptures give us a good idea of the original stupa- It is not improbable that the two slender pillars, with capitals shaped like stupas which Dr. Burgess thinks may have been the emblem of the Caityaka school, represent the regular *torana stambhas*. Two or four lions seated on pillars guarded the gateways of Amaravati and from these the later *simhadvaras* (lion gateways) of Mukhalingam and other Kalinga temples have developed.

Connecting the four gateways is the rail round the stupa which is sometimes richly sculptured on the inside with scenes from the legends of Buddha in his various births, the outer side showing only dwarfs, lotuses and half-lotuses on the uprights and cross-bars and a long undulating flower garland on the coping. Of the garland Dr. Foucher says that it is a pseudo-flower garland and only a long purse full of coins and hence appropriately issuing from the mouths of yakshas, guardians of treasure, for the benefit of the devotees. The plinth was also carved on the outside with representations of men running after mythical animals. The plinth was absent on the inner side as the floor between the rail and the base of the stupa was somewhat elevated, being reached by steps beginning with a moonstone just near the gateway.

An account of the parts of the stupa and their relation to one another, study of which is essential to a proper understanding of the structure, is given in a very interesting and illuminating paper of Prof. Dubreuil entitled *L'architecture d' Amaravati*. In this he has given pictures to illustrate his points, one of which is here given with his kind permission. He divides the three main divisions of the stupa into smaller parts. The first, the cylindrical part or base, is composed of two subordinate parts (1) *the sculptured panel zone below and* (2) *the narrow frieze above. The second, the hemispherical part, is composed of* (1) *a range of sculpture, (2) a plain zone above, (3) a decorated collar and (4) a plain zone at the top.* On the top is the square part, the harmika, which is a balustrade around a central pillar of imposing dimensions, beside which are the parasols. Prof. Dubreuil explains the square shape of the harmika by comparing it with the hedges around

caityavrkshas of which this with the central pillar forms so close a parallel, a convincing explanation.

There are five pillars on each projection, square at the base, then octagonal and finally rounded at the top. The platform is rather narrow all along for the size of the stupa. Prof. Dubreuil thinks that as no steps leading to the top of the platform are to be seen it is probable that it was not used as path but served as a drain for the rain water that ran down the hemispherical part of the stupa. But as at Nagarjunakonda there are steps leading to the platform it probably was used for perambulatory purposes, and similar steps to the platform no doubt existed at Amaravati and elsewhere. The sculptor may have omitted them either as unimportant details or because they existed only at the back of the stupa which cannot be seen in the representation of its front.

Types of Stupa :

- a. Sāririka stupa :-** As reliquary stūpas containing the chief corporeal relics of Gotama the Buddha, or in short the stupa built on the relics of the Buddha. Stupa of Piprahwa-Kapilavattu, Dharmarajika stupa at Sarnath, Mahastupa at Nagarjunakonda had relics of Buddha inside them.
- b. Uddhesika stupa:-** As commemorative stūpas erected at places associated with important event in the life of the Buddha- like the turning of the Wheel of Law - *Dhammacakkapavattana*, or the passing away - Mahaparinibbana. Eg. Dhamekh Stupa at Sarnath or Mukutabandhana stupa at Kusinagara.
- c. Paribhogika stupa-** Stupa built on the objects used by the Buddha in his lifetime, like stupa built on the pieces of the begging bowl at Sopara is the paribhogika stupa.

(ii) VIHARA :

The Vihara is a residential place for the monks and nuns. The origin of vihara can be traced back to the temporary structures erected by the monks themselves for the rain retreat of three months in a particular boundary and then dismantled by them. These structures are unique to Buddhist architecture as they show the discipline, code of conduct as per the Vinaya rule of the Buddhism, clearly reflected in the architecture. The systematic planning and layout of the sites, even depicting the development of Buddhism through the ages, as per the

changes in Buddhist philosophy and characteristics, also marks these. The donations of lay followers of the *aramas* or gardens with the structures for residence is the next stage of development of the viharas. The residential complexes or Viharas of the Sangha in later Buddhism became the universities of Buddhist studies like Nalanda. The typical plan of the vihara developed with time is, the rooms around the central courtyard. In case of structural vihara the central courtyard would be open to sky while in case of rock-cut vihara it is an enclosed space.

(iii) CHETIYAGHARA :

“The house of the chetiya” is *chetiya*ghara. It is an enclosed place for meditation and worship of the stupa. To study the relationship between architecture and vipassana, study of chaityagruha is very important. The earlier chetiyaagharas were circular in shape and the archaeological finds of rock-cut as well as structural chetiyaagharas in circular shapes with stupa inside proves this. Buddhism adopted circular shape for the chetiyaaghara as it proved to be practically suitable as well as philosophically and psychologically fulfilling the demands. The apsidal planned vaulted roofed chetiyaagharas developed from the circular ones and can be clearly seen from the different phases it went through years. The existence of the apsidal planned chetiyaaghara proved the existence of vipassana meditation in the Sangha and the loss of the vipassana meditation is seen with the change in the shape of the chetiyaaghara which became rectangular in plan. In the later date the chetiyaaghara and vihara was combined together to develop a new element of chetiyaaghara+vihara which changed again with the introduction of image of the Buddha into the vihara.

2.5. ROCK-CUT ARCHITECTURE :

The development of the Buddhist rock-cut architecture can be very easily traced from the excavations of Barabar hills in the 3rd cent B. C. to the excavations at Kanheri that dates to the 11th cent A.D. In the interim period of 1400 or so years rock-cut architecture has been through different phases of development, which can be classified into the spheres of art, architecture, technology and many more.

The rock-cut architecture has evolved from the humble beginning of a single excavation to the group of monasteries. The art of painting,

sculpture has also seen the apex of creativity and declined through the centuries. All these changes are the part of development, which had taken place in Buddhism evolving from Theravada- Hinayāna to Mahāyāna to Vajrayāna, and then completely disappearing from India.

The rock-cut architecture is endowed with sculptures, paintings, inscriptions in Brahmi script and Pali language and thus are unique in themselves. The rain water harvesting seen in the rock-cut architecture is seen as the developed technological feat of the time. The climatological study was done while designing these rock-cut monuments as can be seen through the proper natural lighting through the chaitya arch into the chaityagruha. The torrential rainfall of the Sahyadri is taken care of with the help of the large verandahs in front of the excavations.

Excavated with just chisel and hammer these marvels in stone stood three floor high, with the technology developing through ages. The knowledge of the selection of the stone fit for chiselling is seen reflected through the sites like Karle, Bhaje, Bedse, giving the depth of the understanding of geology of the time.

Small features of the rock-cut architecture like the chaitya arch, evolved from an opening to a grand arch and after becoming the symbolic feature of Buddhism disappeared in a circle of a brick decoration. Similarly evolution of columns, verandah, roof and every other feature of architecture can be traced.

These excavations gives the history of the Buddhism through 2nd BCE to 12th CE and influenced the art and architecture of the south-east Asian countries, as specially such rock-cut architecture is seen on the silk-route.

CHAPTER - 03

BUDDHIST ART & ARCHITECTURE IN SOUTH INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANDHRA PRADESH

3.1. INTRODUCTION :

It is not generally known that Buddhism flourished in South India in ancient times. The ancient chronicles of Sri Lanka such as the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvāṃsa* are silent on the subject. In the distant past, South India primarily meant the three kingdoms of the Chera, Chola, and Pandya or the region known as the Tamil land proper, which broadly comprised the present day Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In modern usage, however, South India covers the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu – the States where the Dravidian group of languages are spoken.

The glorious epoch of Buddhism in South India marked the efflorescence of culture in every aspect of life. The self-sacrificing Bhikkhus not only worked for their own spiritual elevation, attainment of Nirvana, but also helped and guided the vast multitude to understand and practice the sublime Dhamma based on love, compassion and equality. As a result, education became widespread, social barriers were loosened, and the Buddha Viharas became the temples of learnings well as resorts of spiritual solaced for the people from all walks of life. And Buddhist art became the vehicle of cultured light dispelling the surrounding gloom.

The most important Buddhist shrines in ancient South India were: Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Bhattiprolu, Ghantasala and Jaggayyapetta in Andhra; Banavasi in Karnataka; Vanji in Kerala; and Kanchi and Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu. The immortal forms of art and sculpture created by the southern artists can be seen and admired in the Government Museum, Madras, and at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh. The royal and public support offered to the Buddha's religion is self-evident from the large number of inscriptions left behind by the pious Buddhists at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda and other places. It is significant that all the Brahmi epigraphs in South India are associated with the Buddhists.

3.2. BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE IN ANDHRA PRADESH :

The Buddhist Architecture in Andhra Pradesh is represented by the Rock-cut caves and brick and stone built Stupas, Chaityas, Viharas and Silamandapas. The Rock-cut caves are seen at *Guntapalli, Kapavaram, Erravaram, Gopalpatnam, Pandavulametta and Undavalli*. The peculiarity of stupas in Andhradesa lies in the *Ayaka-platforms* built in the four cardinal directions, with five *Ayaka-pillars* representing the five great events of Siddhartha Gautama's life – Birth, Renunciation, Enlightenment, First Sermon, Mahaparinibbana as seen at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda.

Both tradition and archaeological evidence show that the nucleus of the *Maha-chaitya* came into existence sometime in the second half of the third century BC, when the Maurya emperor Asoka launched upon a career of propagating the Buddhist ideals. It is said that one Mahadeva, who was sent to this part of the country as a missionary, laid the foundation of the stupa complex at Amaravati, which in fulness of time grew into a monument of stupendous dimensions and vitality. The post-Asokan phase extending for two or three centuries witnessed a phenomenal growth of monastic institutions in Andhra-desa. The Satavahana rulers are also remarkable for their contributions to Buddhist art and architecture. Between the first century B.C. and third century A.D. were built numerous stupas along the Krishna in South-east India on sites including *Amaravati and Nagarjunkonda* in Guntur District and *Jaggayyapeta, Ghantasala, Gudivada and Bhattiprolu* in Krishna District. The Amaravati style of sculpture also influenced the sculpture of Southeast Asia and represent the architectural development of the Satavahana periods. Ashokan Stupas were enlarged, the earlier bricks and wood works being replaced with stone works. The most famous of these monuments are the stupas, the most famous among them being the Amravati Stupa and the Nagarjunakonda Stupa.

In later period some additions and alterations must have been made to the maha-chaitya during the prosperous rule of the Ikshvaku kings. The drum-slabs showing a representation of stupa with minute carvings belonged to this period when a number of smaller stupas, perhaps votive in character, also came into existence. The technical skill and artistic excellence of the Andhra craftsmen are best seen in the construction of the stupas and especially in the manufacture of small caskets of crystal and other jewellery.

3.3. IMPORTANT BUDDHIST SITES IN ANDHRA PRADESH :

Andhra Pradesh's Vengi region, with its plethora of ancient stupas, stands as a testament to the rich Buddhist heritage of India. Notable sites in Jaggayyapeta, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Bhattiprolu, and Ghantasala reflect the profound impact of *the Amaravati School of Art*, which flourished during the Satavahana period.

A number of Buddhist temples and monasteries are spread over the whole of the state are held in great reverence by Buddhist community. Some of these temples and monasteries have gained international fame while others are important as local tourist attractions. These centers might include small towns and cities where Buddhism has flourished. The stupas, statues and caves are sure to in still in you a spirituality that is so unique to Buddhism.

The sites reveal an abundance of information and understanding about Buddhism of a bygone era. Undoubtedly, the *Andhra Art Style* (Amaravati School of Art) finds creative expression in the Buddhist symbols that are used to depict Buddhist art and architecture in Andhra Pradesh.

Important Buddhist sites in Andhra Pradesh are as follows :

(1). Amaravati Stupa :

Amaravati, which is 16 miles west of Guntur, is the most important Buddhist site in Andhra. Amarāvati Stupa is a ruined Buddhist stūpa at the village of Amaravathi, Palnadu district, Andhra Pradesh, India, probably built in phases between the third century BCE and about 250 CE. It was enlarged and new sculptures replaced the earlier ones, beginning in about 50 CE. It was first discovered by Colonel Mackenzie in the year 1797. The surviving important sculptures from the site are now in a number of museums in India and abroad; many are considerably damaged. The great majority of sculptures are in relief, and the surviving sculptures do not include very large iconic Buddha figures, although it is clear these once existed. The largest collections are the group in the Government Museum, Chennai (along with the friezes excavated from Goli), that in the Amaravati Archaeological Museum, and the group in the British Museum in London.

The stupa at this place is the largest and most famous. It was first begun as early as the second century B.C. and was enlarged between 150 and 200 A.D. by the efforts of Nagarjuna. Its dome measures 162' and has a height of 95'. The width of the pradaksinapatha is 15', and the railing surrounding it 14' high. This stupa is larger than the Sanchi stupa which is 120' wide and 54' high. The beautiful railings depict scenes from the Buddha's life. The relief medallions, beautifully balanced in composition, are among the greatest works of art in India. The Amaravati stupa could well vie in artistic beauty and grandeur with the Sanchi and Bharhut stupas in the North. Like the Mathura and Gandhara schools of sculpture, the Amaravati school enjoyed great influence. Its products were carried to Ceylon and South-East Asia and had a marked effect on the local styles. The Chinese traveller and Buddhist monk *Hiuen Tsang* visited Amaravati in 640 CE, stayed for some time and studied the *Abhidhammapitakam*. He wrote an enthusiastic account of the place, and the viharas and monasteries there.

The Amaravati School of Art developed during the Satavahana dynasty, the Amaravati School of Art is renowned for its indigenous style, significantly influencing Buddhist art in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Its sculptures are celebrated for their intricate detailing and are preserved in prestigious museums worldwide, including the Chennai Museum, National Museum in Delhi, Amaravati Site Museum, and the British Museum in London.

(2). Nagarjunakonda Stupa :

A. R. Saraswati was the first Archaeologist to have discovered the ruins of Nagarjunakonda in the year 1926. During the excavation Paleolithic and Neolithic Era's Stone Age tools were discovered. It is situated on the south bank of the river Krishna in the Guntur district. It is named after the renowned Buddhist Monk Nagarjuna (the famous Buddhist scholar and the contriver of Mahayana Buddhism) who imparted his summons over here. Coins issued by the later Satavahana kings (including Gautamiputra Satakarni, Pulumavi, and Yajna Satakarni) have been discovered at Nagarjunakonda. An inscription of Gautamiputra Vijaya Satakarni, dated to his 6th regnal year, has also been discovered at the site, and proves that Buddhism had spread in the region by this time. The site, dating back to 3rd century AD, was a major centre for Buddhist learning and went on to become the capital of Ikshvaku kingdom.

It was also a *mahastupa*, enshrining the mortal remains of the Buddha, and was probably built in the time of Asoka. It was renovated with additions by Santisiri and other ladies of the local Ikshvaku royal family, to whom goes the credit of making Buddhism popular in Andhra in the third century CE. Now it is in ruins which are greater than those at Amaravati. Hundreds of remarkable sculptures executed in the Amaravati style have been found. From the inscriptions on the Ayaka pillars, it is evident that Nagarjunakonda, the ancient city of Vijayapuri, was of great importance as a centre of Buddhism and enjoyed international fame. Several monasteries were built at this place for the residence of Buddhist monks of different schools coming from different countries like Ceylon, Kashmir, Gandhara, and China. The people of Andhra traded in and outside the country and had close contacts with the Roman world of the time.

(3). Bhattiprolu Stupa :

Bhattiprolu is a village in Bapatla district of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. It is the headquarters of Bhattiprolu mandal in Tenali revenue division. The *Buddhist stupa* in the village is one of the centrally protected monuments of national importance.

The original name of Bhattiprolu was Pratipalapura, a flourishing town in the ancient Sala kingdom that predated Andhra Satavahanas. The earliest Buddhist monument in the region is the Bhattiprolu stupa built in the second century B.C. by available inscriptional evidence, King Kuberaka who was ruling over Bhattiprolu around 230 BCE. The claim that it was a mahastupa enshrining the mortal remains of the Buddha is justified by the discovery of a bone relic inside a crystal casket together with flowers made of gold and pearls. One of the earliest evidence of Brahmi script in South India comes from Bhattiprolu.

Three mounds were discovered in Bhattiprolu in 1870. In 1892 when excavations were undertaken by Alexander Rea, three inscribed stone relic caskets containing crystal caskets, relics of Buddha and jewels were found. The stupa was found to be 40 meters in diameter with an additional basement of 2.4 meters wide running all around. The most significant discovery is the crystal relic casket of Sarira Dhatu of the Buddha from the central mass of the stupas. The Mahachaitya (great stupa) remains of a large pillared hall, a large group of ruined votive stupas with several images of Buddha, a stone receptacle containing

copper vessel, which in turn, contained two more, a silver casket and within it, a gold casket enclosing beads of bone and crystal were found.

(4). Phanigiri Stupa :

Phanigiri is a Buddhist site in Suryapet district, Telangana. It dates to the 1st Century BCE - 4th century CE period. The site is a major discovery in the history of the early India. It is closely related to the stupa complexes at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. Previously the name of the village is Dharmachakrapuram but later it is changed to Phanigiri. The name is derived from two words which represent the shape of the hill (*phani*=snake, *giri*=hill).

Excavations conducted at Phanigiri by the State Department of Archaeology and Museums, brought to light a Mahastupa, apsidal Chaityagrihas, votive Stupas, Congregation hall viharas, platforms with staircases at various levels. Life size Stucco of Bodhisattva and a rare Octagonal-shaped Stupa were found in the latest excavations. Two large footprints in the complex are believed to belong to Gautama Buddha. The place also houses three viharas which were once served as the dwelling for the Buddhist monks. Brahmi label inscriptions of the Satavahana and Ikshvaku times, (2nd – 3rd Century A.D.) punch marked coins, and coins issued by the Kshatrapas, Romans, Mahatalavara chiefs etc. and Several lime stone sculptural panels depicting the great events of Siddhartha – Gautama's life, Jataka tales, and Buddhapada slabs, Buddha and Bodhisattva images were also recovered from the site. The exposed structures have to be restored and conserved and valuable Buddhist Sculptures to be displayed in a museum.

(5). Guntupalli Group of Buddhist Monuments :

The Guntupalle or Guntupalli Group of Buddhist Monuments is located near Kamavarapukota, Eluru district, in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India. It is around 40 km away from Eluru. The rock-cut part of the site has two Buddhist caves, a chaitya hall and a large group of stupas. The chaitya hall has a rare carved stone entrance replicating wooden architecture, a simpler version of that at the Lomas Rishi Cave.

There are remains of structural buildings in brick and stone, including remains of two vihara made of brick, as well as excavated caves at two levels, including an unusual structural chaitya hall (that is, one built above ground). The core of this consists of the stone stupa with

an enclosed path around it allowing ritual parikrama (circumambulation). They mostly date to 200-0 BCE, with some sculptures added later. The main building above ground is in brick, around a stone stupa, with over 30 smaller stupas on a terrace in front of it. There are ruins of two other buildings.

During excavation, three relic caskets were found. The caskets had many precious elements like gold, silver, crystal beads. The bronze image of Padmapani was found along with one of the caskets. The inscription on the casket was in the Devanagari script which indicates the year as from the 9th to 10th century CE.

(6). Ghantasala Stupa :

Ghantasala is a town and the headquarters of Ghantasala mandal in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. Kanṭakasola was the ancient name of Ghantasala. It was also mentioned by Ptolemy as Kantakossyla. Boswell of the East India Company first reported Ghantasala as a historical site in 1870-71. Alexander Rea excavated the stupa at Ghantasala, which had a circumference of 112 feet and a height of 23 feet. The remains of an important Buddhist stupa and sculptural slabs were found in 1919-20. Ghantasala was once a flourishing town of Indo-Roman trade as well as an important religious centre. Carved limestone columns belonging to pillared halls associated with Buddhist monastic establishments (2-3rd centuries BC) have been discovered. The ruined Maha Chaitya or stupa that was excavated here is of a unique design. A cube of solid bricks is set in the centre, inscribed with 12 constellations of the zodiac.

The chaityas had a texture and size unique to the Satavahana times and had separate dwelling places for Buddhist monks in the complex. All walls were found to have beautiful plastering with superfine lime mortar. A three-dimensional limestone carved structure, embellished on the dome portion of the stupa had two garland bearers, a dhamma chakra and a miniature stupa on a throne in the middle. Objects such as a four-by-three-feet '*Purna Kalasa*' containing lotus flowers, indicating the birth of Gautama Buddha were also discovered. The stupa had concentric inner wheels radiating towards a central chamber. primary amongst them is a raised cylindrical mound with a semi spheric.

CHAPTER - 04

AMARAVATI STUPA

4.1. GENERAL INFORMATION :

Amaravati Stupa (Lat. 16° 34' N; Long. 80° 17' E) is a ruined Buddhist stupa situated at the village of Amaravati, Palnadu District, Andhra Pradesh on the right bank of the River Krishna. It occupies a pre-eminent position in the history of Indian Art. It is situated about 35 km to the town of Guntur, which is the Headquarter of the district of the same name in Andhra Pradesh. It is the important Buddhist site in South India.

The excavated stupa site and the Archaeological Museum are the main attraction here. The name Amaravati is relatively modern having been applied to the town and site after the Amaresvara Lingasvamin Temple was built in the 18th century. Amaralingesvara Temple in the village is one of the Pancharama Kshetra for Hindus. Amaravati stupa also known as '*Maha-chaithya*' along with other excavated structures and Amaravati Archaeological Museum housing some of the best sculpture of Amaravati School of Art and Architecture. The excavated stupa site is adjacent to the Ancient Satavahana capital Dhanyakataka. Later the Pallava kings had their capital at Dharanikota before they migrated to Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu.

The surviving important sculptures from the site are now in a number of museums in India and abroad; many are considerably damaged. The great majority of sculptures are in relief, and the surviving sculptures do not include very large iconic Buddha figures, although it is clear these once existed. The largest collections are the group in the Government Museum, Chennai (along with the friezes excavated from Goli), that in the Amaravati Archaeological Museum, and the group in the British Museum in London.

Art historians regard the art of Amaravati as one of the three major styles or schools of ancient Indian art, the other two being the Mathura style, and the Gandharan style. Largely because of the maritime trading links of the East Indian coast, the Amaravati school or Andhra style of sculpture, seen in a number of sites in the region, had great influence on art in South India, Sri Lanka and South-East Asia.

Like other major early Indian stupas, but to an unusual extent, the Amaravati sculptures include several representations of the stupa itself, which although they differ, partly reflecting the different stages of building, give a good idea of its original appearance, when it was for some time "the greatest monument in Buddhist Asia", and "the jewel in the crown of early Indian art".

4.2. DISCOVERY OF THE SITE :

Colonel Colin Mackenzie of the Trigonometrical Survey discovered in 1797 the remains of the Ancient stupa of Amaravati, the mound is locally known as 'Dipalidinne' or 'Hillock of Lamps' on the southern bank of the Krishna River in Guntur District. The mound was then being dug up on the orders of the zamindar (Landlord) of Chintapalle, *Raja Vasi Reddy Nayudu*, who had just then shifted his capital from Chintapalle to Amaravati which was one of the five reputed seats of Siva in the Andhra country Bhimarama, Komararama, Draksharama and Kshirarama being the other four. The zamindar had invited many from Chintapalle, Penuganchiprolu, Nandigram and Jaggayyapeta to people his newly established town and helped them liberally form building new houses. He laid the foundation of the modern township around the Amaresvara Temple. The landlord, who suspecting hidden treasure in it, ordered it to be dug. He was however disappointed in his hopes and the carved slabs were removed to the Amaresvara temple and the tank Sivaganga for building flights of steps, other slabs were used in Musalman mosques as James Borges says, "first been carefully diverted for of every carving by rubbing them on harder stones, to prevent, as it is said, any pollution arising to Muhammadan faiths from idolations substances". (Borges, p.15)

At this time some sculpture slabs came to light and the news reached Mackenzie. He identified the mound of some 90 feet in diameter and a height of about 20 feet. Mackenzie realized the importance of his discovery and revisited Amaravati in 1816, with several European officials, with whom he camped there for preparing drawings of the Sculptures. He removed a number of slabs to Masulipatnam when seven were sent to the Bengal Asiatic Society's Museum at Calcutta, four other slabs were to Government Museum Madras.

In 1830 Mr. Robertson, collector of Masulipatnam, brought some 33 large slabs from Amaravati to beautify the square of a new market place there called after him. In 1835, Frederick Adam, the Governor of Madras, ordered them to be sent to Madras to be preserved in the Museum of the literary society.

In 1845 Sir Walter Elliot, the commissioner at Guntur made some attempts to excavate the south-west part of the mound and recovered a few sculptured pieces. In 1853 they were placed in the front entry of the Museum till they were ordered to be sent to England later. Towards the close of the century, scholars like Robert Sewell (in 1876) made excavations at Amaravati obtaining a grant for the purpose. In 1881 Mr. Burges of the Archaeological Survey of Madras visited the place and found that no trace of the stupa above the foundations was left, the entire mound having been converted into a hug pit. There were about 255 slabs and fragments unearthed by him. So more were discovered by Mr. Burges and over 170 slabs were packed to be sent to Madras where they arrived two years later.

Alexander Rea (in 1888-89) made attempts to excavate and record the sculptured stones systematically. In 1890 eleven slabs were sent by the collection of Kietne and they arrived by boat from Bezawada to Madras 128 marbles from Amaravati in 189. Another boat with 52 marbles was despatched a month later. Mr. Rea conducted two more operations – one in 1905-06 and the other in 1909-08. The last operation introduced a new element in the history of the site by uncovering remains of Megalithics ascribable to a period prior to the construction of the *maha-chaithya*. He also laid a bare a few minor stupas and some bronze images.

The recent operations was conducted by R Subrahmanyam and K Krishnamurthy of the Archaeological Survey in 1958-59, recovered a large number of inscribed Architectural pieces, sculptured fragments, reliquaries and other minor antiquities including sculptures and reliefs ascribable to the medieval times.

M Venkataramayya and K Raghavacharya excavated Dhanyakataka, the fortified capital of Satavahanas in the year 1962-65 and it revealed five periods of occupation of the site from the beginning of the 5th century BCE. Some more inscribed and sculptured slabs were exposed in an excavation carried out by I K Sharma in 1973-74 at a site

close to the *maha-chaithya*. The lowest stratum yielded both Black and Redware and the Northern Black Polished Ware.

The Amaravati sculptures are exhibited in a special hall devoted to Buddhist sculptures from various stupas in the Krishna valley, such as Jaggayyapeta, Ghantasala and Bhattiprolu; but the Amaravati sculptures form the bulk of the collection, they are so arranged that a small part of the long rail is suggested.

Sculptures from the *maha-chaithya* sites are distributed over several museums most of them are housed in the Madras Government Museum, Madras and the British Museum, London. Originally, the collection, in the Amaravati Museum, comprised those left at the site by Burges and Alexander Rea. In addition, there are a few antiquities from Alluru, Gummadiiduru and Lingarajapalli. Apart from the Site Museum, several Museums across India and around the world have specimens from Amaravati.

Significant collections of sculpture are held in the following places:

India :

1. Government Museum, Chennai
2. Archaeological Museum, Amaravati
3. Indian Museum, Kolkatta
4. National Museum of India, New Delhi
5. State Museum, Hyderabad
6. Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai
7. State Museum, Pudukkottai
8. State Museum, Lucknow
9. Patna Museum, Patna
10. Baudhasree Archaeological Museum, Vijayawada

United Kingdom :

1. The British Museum, London

France:

1. Guimet Museum

Singapore :

1. Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore

United States of America :

1. Museum of Arts, Boston
2. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C
3. Seattle Art Museum, Seattle

4.3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND :

Dhanakataka, the original name of Amaravati , is found in two of its earliest inscriptions . They are in letters of the Mauryan variety and may be assigned to 200 B.C. From the old Inscriptions, it can be noticed that the stupa was marked as the 'Dipaladinne' or 'The Hill of lights'. The earliest sculptures found at Amaravati are in the primitive style resembling those of Bharhut. The great stupa at Amaravati is called in the inscriptions *maha-chaithya* and was held in great reverence. The mention by Taranatha of the stupa at Dhanakataka in glowing terms coupled with the tradition that Asoka built 84,000 stupas, over the many divisions he made of the relics that he recovered from the seven stupas he opened, suggest that this was also probably one of the stupas originally built by him- That Asoka propagated his faith in *Andhradesa* is quite clear. The statement in the Ceylon chronicles about the Dhamma propagation of the emperor has been confirmed by archaeological excavations. This is in conformity with literary evidence—Mahavamsa—that Asoka sent Majjhima and Kassapa to the Himalaya region. Of the other missionaries sent out by Asoka to various places Mahadeva was one. He was sent out to Mahishamandala (Geiger, p. 82). The Siddhapura edict of Asoka was obviously intended for those of Mahishamandala who came under the influence of Mahadeva. Mahishamandala later came within the territory of the rulers of the whole of Dakshinapatha, the Satavahanas. And Mahadeva appears to have travelled eastwards too, to Pallavabhogga or Pallavanad, the present Palnad in Guntur district. The Earliest mention we have of the Telugu country is in the famous edicts of Asoka, about 250 BCE, in the second of which he speaks of the neighbouring kingdoms "as Chera, Pandya, Satyaputra, Keralaputra as far as Ceylon". Here Satyaputra represents Telangana.

King Kharavela of Mahameghavahana dynasty extended his sway over parts of Andhra-desa in the 1st century BCE. That the Mahameghavahanas ruled over the West Godavari region is affirmed by the recent discovery of the inscription of one Sada, the

Mahameghavahana king and the lord of Kalinga, form the Buddhist site at Guntappalli. Some minor dynasty like the Airas might have ruled in the region in the 1st or 2nd century BCE. The Airas were possibly the descendants of the Mahameghavahanas, for Kharavela also claimed to be an Aira.

Dhanakataka rose to great glory as the eastern seat of the Satavahana monarchs, but when exactly it was made so important is not clear. The first suggestion of the Satavahana king as lord of Dhanakata is in the word Dhanakatasamanehi in an inscription of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi. Pratishthana was the early seat of the Satavahanas but later the town appears to have been destroyed by the Kshaharatas and again rebuilt and occupied by Pulumavi who was thus lord of Dhanakataka, Navanara or Navanagara the newly built town being the same as Paithan as stated by Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar. The Satavahanas or Andhras, who held away for about four centuries, from the 2nd century BC till the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Amaravati itself has produced inscriptions belonging to Vasisthiputra Pulumavi, Sivamaka Sada or Sivaskanda Satakarni and Gautamiputra Yajna Satakarni. The practice of Buddhism was predominant at the time of Satavahanas and the dynasty was partly responsible for the prevalence of Buddhism in the region. The city was also once a holy site of Mahayana Buddhism.

The occurrence of the inscription of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi on one of the slabs from a pillar from the rail-gate of the Amaravati stupa and the tradition recorded by Taranatha that Nagarjuna built the rail around the stupa, taken along with Hieun Thsang's statement about the Satavahana building a sangharama for the great teacher on Sriparvata, probably the present Nagarjunakonda, leave no doubt that he was the contemporary of Pulumavi as well. This must have been about the middle of the second century when Pulumavi is mentioned as ruling from Pratishthana by Ptolemy who wrote sometime between 139 and 161 A. D. Taranatha says that Nagarjuna was the head of the Buddhist Order for over sixty or sixty-two years. If he were a youth in the time of Hala he would have been extremely old, over 90 years old, during the time of Vasishthiputra, commanding greater and greater respect with the advance of years.

The aged monk Nagarjuna was remembered with great respect and awe years after his death, and the large congregation of monks (which included his famous disciple Aryadeva) left by him at the mountain named after him Nagarjunakonda, by its worthy continuance of

Nagarjuna's traditions must have also contributed to the continued flourishing state of Buddhism in the neighbourhood. This accounts for the gift of the superintendent of the paniyaghara or water-house established by Sri Siva, the successor of Pulumavi Vasishthiputra, recorded on one of the coping fragments from Amaravati. Dr. Bhandarkar identifies this Siri Siva, a brother of Pulumavi, with the Vasishthiputra Satakarni, the son-in-law of daman.

Shortly after, the Shatavahanas were finally replaced by the Ikshvakus of Nagarjunakonda, who ruled for about a century or so. Amaravati was undoubtedly included in their kingdom, and in this period, as the art-style and the ornamental character of some inscriptions may show, some additions to the *maha-chaithya* complex were also made. With the fall of the Ikshvakus there was a marked decline in the active patronage to Buddhism in the Andhra country. The early Pallavas, whose earliest record, belonging to one Simhavarman, comes from Manchikallu, near Nagarjunakonda were not known to be great patrons of Buddhism. One of the Pallava kings Maharajadhiraja Shivaskandavarman had his headquarters at Dhanyakataka. No wonder that the religion perished at their hands especially when great and zealous devotees like Appar and gaint intellects like Sankara and Udayana gave the final blow by refuting the highly developed philosophical disquisitions of the Buddhists.

In the early Pallava inscription of Sivaskandavarman from Maidavolu the territory south of the Krishna is called Andhrapatha in which is Dhannakada, and in another from Hirahadagalli (loc. cit. 1200) there is mention of Satahanaratha or Satavahana district. Hiuen Tshang mentions towards the end of his description of Kosala (Dakshina Kosala) of king So-to-pho-ho, Satavahana, who for the sake of Nagarjuna had established a sanghararaa on a mountain 300 li or sixty miles to the south of the country —the famous Nagarjuna. konda where the sangharama and the many noble stupas about it have been excavated by Mr. Longhurst. Taranatha mentions the rail around the Amaravati stupa as having been erected by Nagarjuna (Burgess, p. 5). And the legend in the Lilavatikatha makes Nagarjuna the minister of the Satavahana king Hala, the author of Gathasaptasati. These, taken with the tradition preserved in Tibet that Nagarjuna died at the monastery at Sri Parvata which he had established and where he appears to have spent the major part of his life, all go to show that the king should have been present at his eastern seat not far away from his minister (or rather

sage adviser) whose personality counted greatly with the king who though of the orthodox Brahmanical faith not merely tolerated but liberally encouraged Buddhism as it was espoused by a great man like Nagarjuna. The renovation of the rail is also mentioned in an inscription and the overseer of the works was venerable Budharakhita. The munificence of the Satavahana kings, as also the great missionary influence of Nagarjuna and his followers among the people of their time, explain the large number of stupas in the Krishna valley of which the noblest and the most venerated was the one at Amaravati. Here merchants, townfolk, villagers, artisans, perfumers, leather workers, all sorts of men vied with one another and with the monks and nuns in contributing carved slabs for the stupa.

Vishnukundins also claims Amaravati as their capital. An inscription on a boulder at Dharanikota mentioning the name of one Vishnuvardhana Maharaja may be attributed to the Chalukyas of Vengi, who succeeded the Vishnukundins in the Andhra country. During the 12th centuries the Kota Chiefs ruled from Dharanikota itself. They were followed successively by the Reddy kings of Kondavidu and the Vijayanagara Rulers.

The only structure of tolerably ancient date still intact at Amaravati is the Amaresvara temple. Its antiquity is not known precisely but the existence of an early Eastern Chalukya inscription at Dharanikota and of later inscriptions of the 12th, 14th and 16th centuries of a Kota chief Mahamandalesvara Ketaraja, of Reddis, and of the Vijayanagar emperor Krishnadevaraya respectively among many others in the Amaresvara temple point to an early enough importance of the Hindu shrine as well. But as pointed out by Mr. T. N. Ramachandran the Chalukyas “tolerated Buddhism” and did not pull down the stupas, which accounts for their existence alongside Hindu temples. In an inscription (C Sivaramamurti, *Amaravati sculptures in the Chennai Government Museum*, p. 8) of the 12th century A.D- Amaravati is described thus : “There is a city (named) Sri Dhanyakataka, which is superior to the city of the Gods, (and) where (the temple of) Sambhu (Siva) (named) Amaresvara is worshipped by the Lord of Gods Indra) ; where the God Buddha, worshipped by the Creator, is quite close and) where (there is) a very lofty Caitya, well-decorated with various sculptures.” And even in the 12th century as Dr, Hultzsch points out there were still followers of the Buddhist faith like the consorts of Keta who made offerings at the Great Caitya. Three

Buddhist images of the late medieval period recently removed to the Madras Museum from the Amaresvara temple prove the same thing.

The Chinese traveller and Buddhist monk Hiuen Tsang visited Amaravati in 640 CE, stayed for some time and studied the *Abhidhammapitakam*. He wrote an enthusiastic account of the place, and the viharas and Monasteries there. He saw '*a crowd of Buddhist monasteries but most of them were deserted, only twenty still remaining in good condition with about a thousand monks, mostly Mahasanghikas.*'

The *maha-chaithya* continued as a centre of Buddhism site. In the 14th century is evident from the inscription of Dharmakirthi at Gadaladeniya District, Kandy, Sri Lanka, dated to 1344 AD. It states of some repairs carried out to the two-storeyed image shrine at the *maha-chaitya* site. During the period of decline of Buddhism in India, the stupa was neglected and was buried under rubble and grass. The stupa is related to the Vajrayana teachings of Kalachakra, still practiced today in Tibetan Buddhism.

4.4. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STUPA & ITS COMPONENTS :

The Stupa at Amaravati, the biggest in the Andhra country, has invariably been mentioned in inscriptions as '*maha-chaithya*'. The architecture of the Amaravati Stupa is a remarkable example of the skill and creativity of the ancient Indian artisans and craftsmen. The stupa is a circular mound-like structure that consists of several components and features that have their own symbolism and significance. The stupa is also covered with sculptures and carvings that depict scenes from Buddha's life, Jataka stories, animal motifs, and floral patterns. The stupa is a masterpiece of art and style that influenced the development of Buddhist art in India and other regions.

The earliest phase from which we have Architectural remains seems to be Post-Mauryan, from the 2nd century BCE. Its extant remains consist of the drum of the Brick-built stupa. The stupa enlarged in the second phase by additions to the solid earth mound, faced with brick, consisting of railings (*vedika*), the paved *Pradakshinapatha* and carved slabs placed around the stupa proper. As elsewhere these slabs are usually called '*Drum slabs*' because they were placed round the vertical lower part or '*Drum*' of the stupa. The stupa had a simple railing consisting of granite pillars, with plain cross-bars, and coping stones.

The coping stones with youths, animals relief, the early drum slabs, and some other early fragments belong to this period.

Originally, mounted on a circular drum, was the dome or the hemispherical superstructure, crowned by a railed '*harmika*' and a '*chattra*'. The dome, now missing, appears to have been built solidly of large sized bricks measuring 57 x 28 x 7.6 cm. At present it has a height of about 1.55m and a diameter of 49.30 m, the dome or the hemispherical super structure (*Anda*) of 42 m diameter rested over the rim of the drum leaving all round a batter of about 7.1 m; its height might have been at least half its diameter. Tall dome-slabs measuring about 2.32 m and carved with *triratna* and *purna-kumbhas* covered the lower part of the dome, above which probably came the decorations in stucco.

The *Maha-chaithya* has had the vestige of characteristic. '*Ayaka-platforms*' projecting out of the drum at cardinal directions. Four Ayaka Platforms (7.20 x 2.10 m) projected out of the drum at the cardinal directions, a characteristic architectural feature of the Andhra stupas, each carrying give free standing ayaka pillars representing the frive important events in the life of the Buddha viz., Birth, Great Renunciation, Enlightenment, First Sermon and Mahaparinibbhana. Five crystal relic-caskets containing bones and gold flowers were discovered from slot made in the bottom slab of the *Ayaka-Pillars*. Built during the time of Asoka but was extensively enlarged and embellished by last rulers. The entire monument was covered with sculptured panels made of limestone or 'Palnad Marble' found in the neighbourhood. The sculptures mostly portrayed scenes from Buddhist Mythology. If religious monuments are any index of the popularity and influence popular and influential.

The railing, the *vedika* of the inscriptions, measured about 54 m in diameter, pierced on all the four sides by gateway. It consisted of upright pillars (*sthamba*) set in a foundation of brick. Old granite uprights might have been used, at one stage, as buttresses to the railing. Three cross-bars (*suchi*), fixed into mortises, connected each pair of uprights which too had tenon on top for fixing coping-stones with rounded top. According to Barrett, '*the new railings were some 3 metres tall, 59 metres in diameter, with 136 pillars and 348 crossbars, running for 803 feet in total. At each of the four cardinal points the arms of the rail, leaving an opening of 26 feet, turned out radially for a distance of 16 feet then having turned inwards at right angles for a distance of 6 ½ feet,*

projected, again at right angles, a further 8 feet' (H.Sarkar, *Amaravati*, p.11). This is possibly the picture of the railing in its most evolved phase.

The decoration of the pillars, sometimes called '*pendaka*' in the inscriptions, consisted of a full and two half-lotuses separated by three wide and shallow flutes. Some of the finest pieces have the whole surface gently curved. On the outer face the flutes above the full lotus usually show men and women adorning a Tree, Wheel or Stupa, while those below depict dancing dwarfs. The inner face is again much more elaborate. The centre lotus, the flutes and sometimes the half-lotuses are given over to Jatakas and the main events of Buddha's life. One type of pillar-the simplest-is smaller than the main series, a little over 8 feet high and 2.6 feet or less wide.

The Cross-bars, called '*suchi*' in the inscriptions, were carved on both faces with full lotuses, except for the inner faces of the middle piece. This contained some great events from Buddha's life. It measures 2.4 feet or less in diameter, with one face plain but curved, following the line of the lenticular mortise. The plain side faced outward. This type seems also to be concentrated in the south-west and north-west quadrants, with a larger group in the latter.

Between the drum of the stupa and the railing is the paved circumbulatory path called *Pradakshinapatha*, having width, varying from 3.70 to 4.0 m (excluding the rail) and paved with slabs of a grey limestone, which was also used Nagarjunakonda for plain work. There are number of circular post-holes, 0.50 m in diameter, along with pradakshinapatha. In certain cases, the bigger ones are found associated with small circular post-hole. May be, these were meant to take pillars surmounted variously by Chaithyas, Lions, Chakras and etc.

Above the dome slabs began the curve of the dome. At the summit of the dome stood the '*Harmika*', which consisted of a rail, similar in construction to the great rail, forming a square with sides some 24 feet long. The harmika has a height of about 1.8 meters and a width of about 3.6 meters. The harmika represents the abode of the gods or the seat of Buddha, and it also symbolizes the eight cardinal directions. From the centre of the '*Harmika*' projected an octagonal pillar sturdier than an Ayaka-Pillar but of the same form, it was probably set deep in the body of the dome. Small pillars, to which were attached streamers and stone umbrellas, were also erected. The curve of the dome was plastered. It

was decorated with freezes of lotus-filled vases, dwarfs carrying the garland, and intricate swags and garlands framing elaborate roundels.

The stupa has an umbrella-like structure or *chhatra* that crowns the *harmika*. The *chhatra* has a height of about 3 meters and a diameter of about 4.5 meters. The *chhatra* represents the protection and sovereignty of Buddha, and it also symbolizes the three jewels of Buddhism: *the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha*. The *chhatra* also has a finial or *kumbha* at the top, which forms a bulbous shape.

The stupa has four gateways or *toranas* that are located at the four cardinal directions: east, west, north, and south. The gateways have a height of about 6 meters and a width of about 3 meters. The gateways represent the four noble truths of Buddhism, and they also symbolize the four stages of Buddha's life: birth, enlightenment, teaching, and death. The gateways are also decorated with sculptures and carvings that depict scenes from Buddha's life, Jataka stories, animal motifs, and floral patterns. The gateways also have a lintel or *shirshaka* at the top, which forms a horizontal beam.

Nothing is known of the position of the *relic-chamber* in the stupa. A stone box and crystal casket, now in Madras, is said to have been obtained by Elliot from the successors of the zamindar who first dug the mound. These remains to be mentioned a type of slabs which was carved with the footprints of the Buddha (*Buddhapada*). This type was found almost exclusively at the east and west gates, and may have been set in the processional path. The *harmika* also has a circular opening or *yasti* at the center, which allows the insertion of a pole or mast.

In the precincts of the stupa stood numerous small stupas of brick. Some probably resembled the simpler examples on *Drum-slabs*. Others were richly decorated. Indeed, size had little to do with elaboration; the *Maha-chaithya* at Nagarjunakonda was severely plain. The Monastic buildings which must have surrounded the stupa have not yet been investigated. The pillared hall (*mandapam*) of such an establishment would have been raised on columns similar to many pieces in the Museum.

These are some of the main features and components of the Amaravati Stupa and their meanings. The stupa is a remarkable

example of the skill and creativity of the ancient Indian artisans and craftsmen, who created a monument that is not only a sacred and revered site for Buddhists, but also a masterpiece of art and style that influenced the development of Buddhist art in India and other regions. The stupa is a must-see attraction for anyone who wants to appreciate the beauty and splendor of the Amaravati art and style.

4.5. THE PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT :

The history of the *Maha-chaithya* extends over a period of about a millennium and a half. It is, therefore, certain the the stupa-complex there must have undergone several major renovations and additions from time to time. This time-span broadly speaking, may be divided into the following five major divisions.

(I). First Phase : (Ashokan – 2nd to 3rd century BCE)

The great stupa at Amaravati is called in the inscriptions '*maha-chaithya*' and was held in great reverence. The mention by Taranatha of the stupa at Dhanakataka in glowing terms coupled with the tradition that Asoka built 84,000 stupas, over the many divisions he made of the relics that he recovered from the seven stupas he opened, suggest that this was also probably one of the stupas originally built by him- That Asoka propagated his faith in Andhradesa is quite clear. The statement in the Ceylon chronicles about the Dhamma propagation of the emperor has been confirmed by archaeological excavations. At and near Sanchi found when he opened the topes there, urns with inscriptions in letters of the Mauryan period "of the good man Kassapagotta, the teacher of all the Himalaya region", "of the good man Majjhima". At Sonari he found urns with the inscriptions " of the good man Kassapagotta, son of Koti, teacher of all the Himalaya region", of the good man Majjhima, son of Kodini " and "of the good man Gotiputta, of the Himalaya, successor of Dundubhissara ". This is in conformity with literary evidence—Mahavamsa—that Asoka sent Majjhima and Kassapa to the Himalaya region. Of the other missionaries sent out by Asoka to various places Mahadeva was one. He was sent out to Mahishamandala. The Siddhapura edict of Asoka was obviously intended for those of Mahishamandala who came under the influence of Mahadeva. Mahishamandala later came within the territory of the rulers of the whole of Dakshinapatha, the Satavahanas. And Mahadeva appears to have

travelled eastwards too, to *Pallavabhogga* or Pallavanad, the present Palnad in Guntur district. It is from here that he went to Anuradhapura in Ceylon for the consecration of the Suvannamalaka stupa or the Ruenwali stupa with a large number of monks totalling according to the Mahavamsa “fourteen lacs and sixty thousand from *Pallava bhoggo*” (Sivaramamurti. C, p. 4). The number of bhikshus may be an exaggeration like the 84,000 stupas built by Asoka. But the recent discovery of Asokan edicts at Yerragudi in Kumool district shows the hand of the emperor at work in Andhradesa near Pallavabhogga where Mahadeva undoubtedly had a large congregation of monks, if not one as large as the number in the Mahavamsa would suggest- Amaravati is not far from Palnad and it is obvious that Mahadeva and his monks must have been at work in the Krishna valley about the close of the third and the beginning of the second century B.C.

Of the Archaeological evidence, the most importance is the discovery of a fragment of a polished quartzite pillar bearing an Asokan edict. It may be noted here that the Asokan columns practically went side by side with some holy structures, particularly stupa, the pillar and the stupa thus constituting one architectural pattern.

The stupa here, during the time of Asoka, must have been of modest proportions. Besides being associated with an inscribed column, it had a railing, possibly made of granite in as much as a few inscriptions incised on granite pillars may be attributed to 3rd century BCE on palaeographical grounds. Some of these granite pillars – the inscriptions call them ‘*thobo*’ or ‘*stambha*’ – bear fine polish reminiscent of the Mauryan tradition; in one case, a ‘*triratna*’, in bold relief is found engraved with a one-line inscription. Originally, they had a height of about 2.3 m with three lenticular mortises for holding the tenons on top of uprights for holding the coping, is also extant. There are, however, four examples where these mortises occur on only one side, thereby indicating their use in the gateway. Evidently the granite rail had at least two gateways.

(II). Second Phase : (Post-Asokan – 200 BCE to 100 BCE)

The Post-Asokan phase extending for two-three centuries witnessed a phenomenal growth of monastic institutions in Andhra-desa. At Amaravati the phase is represented by a large number of inscribed Architectural pieces and sculptured fragment. The stupa enlarged in this phase by additions to the main solid earth mound, face with brick,

consisting of railings (*vedika*) and carved slabs placed around the stupa proper. During this phase the granite rail was replaced by a limestone one. It had plain uprights with three lenticular mortises, suggesting the presence of a three-barrel rail. The total height of the pillar, with a rectangular cross section is 1.9 m; evidently, this type of uprights is smaller in dimensions than the granite ones. In all likelihood, such uprights were associated with plain cross-bars and copings. In fact, the excavations at Amaravati have revealed a large number of plain but inscribed cross-bars varying in length from 46 to 57 cm. All of them have lenticular tenon, with an average height of 35 cm, width being 9 cm. Many of these cross-bars bear donative inscriptions of the second century BC.

An idea of the layout and the form of the stupa-complex during the second century BC can be gathered from its representation incised on one such inscribed cross-bar. It depicts a stupa enclosed by a circular five-barred rail having six uprights crowned by plain copings. The view of the drum is obstructed by the railing but the base of the dome has some wavy decorations. Undoubtedly, the stupa was surmounted by a harmika, whose railing can still be seen in the mutilated part of the slab. In front of the stupa stands a foliated Bodhi-tree surrounded by a four-barred rail.

Belonging more or less to this period or slightly later are a few pillar-fragments with labelled sculptures. One such stele depicts scenes variously of Vaisali, Sravasti, Dhanyakataka and Kusinagara, each with an appropriate label. Moreover, there is also a pillar, in the Government Museum, Madras (Chennai), containing scenes of the Great Departure and an episode that took place on the bank of the Neranjara river at Bodh-Gaya. Both the pillars possibly formed part of a gateway, carved with reliefs portraying important episodes of Budha's life. Similarly, carved architectural members like copings, rail-plinths and other fragments, now in the Government Museum, Madras (Chennai), may also belong to this sub-phase. It is worth-noting that it was primarily the rail and its gateways that underwent renovation in the first few phases of the history of the site, while the stupa remained an unostentatious monument, with little or no embellishments. In the later sub-phase of this period, however, as it appears from a few extant examples, some of which were reused even in later times, the drum was encased with sculptured slabs.

Sculptures of the this phase :

The sculptures of this period are very few and are mostly fragmentary, but they are easily distinguished from the rest- They are characterised by a certain amount of stiffness, and by an awkward pose void of flexions. The face is slightly dull and the peculiarly shaped eyes are slightly aslant. The lips are mere lumps coarsely bevelled. The fingers are either straight like drumsticks or flatly bent without any natural shape. Even the ornaments sit awkwardly in their places. The bracelets though decorated with carefully worked patterns seem to be just flat strips attached to the side visible in the sculpture. The necklaces with more than one jewelled square clasp have a twist at the lower end and rest flat on the chest.

Male figures of this period from Amaravati are to be distinguished by their thick cordshaped waist band from similar contemporary figures from Bharhut and elsewhere that wear a sash tied in ribbon fashion about the waist, along with their women—a mode that is often to be seen only in feminine figures of the various periods in Amaravati. The central tassels of cloth or sash form a double line of zigzags. From the heavy cordshaped waist band ornamented with flowers worn by men hangs a heavy semi-circular loop and the side tassels are as conspicuous as the median tassel- Sometimes the waist band is a thick twisted silken cloth as in the figure of the Cakravartin from Jaggayyapeta a type later developed almost exclusively in Mathura Kushan and Gupta sculpture from which it passes into Chalukyan work.

The cloth worn by men generally covers just the thighs and the folds are indicated by double lines at intervals, but in the case of women the double lines at intervals all along the leg proceed further below the thigh, and though the waist zone is elaborately worked the woman appears to be nude in spite of her dress. In the case of women a strip of cloth—no doubt worked with costly material into patterns—is used as a boundary line of the hair just above the forehead, droops along to the ears and proceeds on either side of the braid or plaited locks which it encircles. Necklets worn by women are flat jewelled strips or strings of beads or gems rather close to the neck with a somewhat large and elongate central gem. The earrings also distinguish the figures of this period. A double-ring beaten flat or into arch shape on one side and into an ornamented square pattern on the other is the common variety.

The coping fragments of this period are as interesting as they are amusing. Here we have quaint dwarfs carrying the usual highly decorated flower garland- The sculptors have chiselled these pieces with great exuberance and have infused more life into them than into any of the other sculptures of the period. The dwarfs are not as awkward in their movement as are the men and women of this period ; they have the other characteristic early features.

Almost all the sculptures from the plinth like a few of the coping pieces are from an earlier rail and invariably all the animals shown here are rather heavy, powerful and elongate. The men running after them hardly seem to control them. Some with wings and eagle heads remind us of similar figures from the empire of Darius. The sculptors who could create such vigorous animals—the hoofs and paws of the bulls and lions strike terror into the heart —were not mere tirots in sculpture, but they were yet evolving that splendid art that was to culminate in the sculpture of more than a couple of centuries later. Even the elephants, in carving whose figures the Indian sculptor has shown skill as great as in working the makara or the lotus, are yet rather clumsy. The swan, a favourite border pattern with the Indian is yet on its way to become the graceful *Rajahamsa* (royal swan) of a later period, an excellent example of which is preserved on one of the marbles in the British Museum.

(III). Third Phase : (Satavahana – 2nd century AD)

The Amaravati stupa is a glorious monument of the Satavahana period. The names of two of the kings of the dynasty are actually inscribed on the slabs that once embellished the stupa. The patronage of the royal house has brought into existence beautiful monuments in the Deccan, inscriptions in which, together with their coins, form the main tangible source for the history of the period. Literature assiduously fostered during their reign has also left its own records that supplement the lithic records- But the inscriptions and coins yet known are of only some of the kings. The dynastic lists in the Puranas give the sequence of dynastic succession and names of kings which are otherwise unknown to us from any other source. At Bhaja, Junnar, Ajanta, Kondane and Pithalkora began the art of the early Satavahana period which later developed at Karle, Nasik, Ajanta and other places and culminated in the best sculptures in Amaravati in the time of Pulumavi.

In this period the western Indian art-tradition made a deep impact on the sculptural and architectural forms of the region. And this trend perhaps arrived at Dhanyakataka even before it was made the royal seat of the Satavahanas. It did not take much time for the local artists to outgrow the original forms and conventions. Soon there ushered in a new form of artistic expression rich in technical skill and plastic beauty. This was indeed a period of great artistic efflorescence that gave the *maha-chaithya* here the most impressive form unsurpassed in the history of stupa-architecture in the south. The brick stupa had certainly a veneer of sculptured slabs depicting stupas and other reliefs, and the rail was replaced by a highly ornamental one, carved with beautiful reliefs and elegant designs. It is this phase that has produced a large number of sculptured objects belonging both to the stupa and the railing. If the bas-reliefs of stupas on early drum-slabs be a true guide to the actual monument, even the ayaka-platforms might have come into existence in this period itself. But this period of ascendancy in the art of the lower Krishna valley might not have been a long one, although it must have had more than one sub-phase. Also, there are three clear landmarks represented by inscriptions (H.Sarkar, *Amaravati*, p.15), the earliest of which refers to the gift of Wheel of Law (Dharma-chakra) at the western gate of the *maha-chaitya* during the time of Vasishtiputra Pulumavi (AD 130-59). Further the railing, at least some part of it, was replaced or renovated in the time of Siri Sivamaka Sada, generally identified with Siva-Sri (AD 159-66) or Sivaskanda Satakami (AD 167-74) of the Puranic list; his inscription is engraved on a coping of the rail of the mature phase. Even the dome-part of the stupa, which rises above the drum, was covered with sculptured slabs. One such dome-slab, about 2.39 m in height, now in the reserve collection, bears an inscription of Yajna Satakarni (c. AD 174-203). But the carvings on them lack artistic quality characteristic of the evolved phase. Taranatha mentions the rail around the Amaravati stupa as having been erected by Nagarjuna (Burgess, p. 5).

Sculptures of this phase :

Sculpture of this period shows a definite step forward. The figures are more graceful and natural. The awkward and stiff bearing of the earlier figures is no longer perceptible here. The faces wear a more likely appearance and the features generally speaking are nearer approaches to the two later periods than the first and the earlier. Though not so few as those of the first period, sculptures of this period are not

very numerous. Most of them are slabs that once encased the great stupa at Amaravati. They are generally in an order depicting the principal scenes from Buddha's life almost always' symbolically though occasionally there is a departure from this rule and for the first time Buddha is shown in human form just more than a couple of times. The origin of Buddha's image is still a matter of controversy but history points to the earliest figures in Gandhara and to their appearance at Mathura and Amaravati simultaneously only in the next century. But it is obvious that the graceful figures at Amaravati with soft form and softer clothing have nothing in common with the moustached or top knotted Graeco-Buddhist Buddhas with exaggerated muscular form and sharp folds.

Asoka watering the Bodhi tree is too weathered to give a good idea of his form, but Mara's daughter and the gnomes that vainly try to entice and vanquish Buddha are cleverly executed, the form and poses of figures and even the composition as a whole being to a great extent the parents of scenes almost identical in the succeeding periods. The sculpture showing prince Siddhartha leaving his palace to roam the world for discovering the truth of life is typical of symbolic representation. The figures of men here are typical of the period ; and there is a broken fragment coming immediately above this at one end showing women in various attitudes who are as typical for their forms. Generally speaking, figures of this period have become more graceful than those that came before them but are yet rather heavy and have not yet that light feeling that is to be seen in the sculptures on the rail or the casing slabs of the votive stupas. As in the earlier sculptures of the first period there are wavy folds in the clothes that drape the figures of this period. The *Satavallika* mode of wear persists. The finest example of this is in a sculpture preserved in the British Museum. Another noteworthy feature of this period is that women, as in Mathura sculptures of the period, are represented dressed and yet appear nude. That they are dressed is easily perceived in the double lines of the cloth incised over the legs ; but though the thick waist bands and loops are here as in later sculptures the arrangement of the small fan-like central *gutticha* (bunch of folds of garment) -very like *macchavalaka*—to cover the nakedness is sometimes absent.

To this period belongs only the rail that was constructed around the great stupa by Nagarjuna but its remains are numerous and imposing. What little of this has survived suffices to show what a noble structure it must have been and the perfection of art at the time. For the

art of the rail period at Amaravati was the most splendid in all India and for all time. The high watermark of Satavahana art is to be sought here and in this period. The figures are delicate and there is a feeling of soft touch in them. Figures crowd in scenes but there is a light feeling in all, flexions characterise poses but nothing can be termed gaudy and there is buoyant feeling of rich life in all of them.

A noteworthy feature in these sculptures absent in previous ones is the delineation of different planes. This is achieved with perfect ease by the sculptor and when we remember how difficult it is to arrange this in relief work the ability of the sculptor can be imagined. The figures of the first plane are cut in deep relief, those of the next plane in lower relief and those of a third and subsequent and more distant plane so arranged that figures in the distance are almost line sketches, in such low relief are they worked. Where the figure is carved obliquely one of the sides is in high relief—this is well noticed in the shoulder, arm etc.,—the other side being less -deeply cut. Even in carving the legs of animals and the like the farther ones are in very low relief. In this period the most often used symbol for Buddha, apart from the empty throne and feet, is a flaming pillar above feet on a lotus crowned by a trisula.

On the rail coping the flower garland develops many additional small strands which are allowed to trail in a pleasing fashion, the main garland being supported not by the dwarfish gnomes of the first period but by graceful youths and damsels. Even when the garland is pulled out of the mouth of a large dwarf *yaksha* or a crocodile these two subjects are treated in a manner different from the early one. The crocodile has changed. Its ears, snout, contour of face, addition of front legs in some cases, have all completely transformed it into a new creature. The fat dwarf of this period is more majestic and wears an aspect in every way different from the comical one of those of the first period. His turban and earrings are an admirable study. The dwarfs on the upright with flowing ribbon-shaped *udarabandha*, and carrying drums and ornamental clubs (dancing in various funny poses) are also different from the early ones, Representation of groups in crowded scenes is easy play for the sculptor of this period ; and the arrangement is always perfect. Sometimes the figures are so arranged as to have a fair balance for artistic effect in the composition but absolute symmetry is avoided; but sometimes they are arranged with meticulous care so that there is perfect symmetry and yet in spite of number and position tallying on either side it is pleasing to the eye. In the representation of scenes of action and human emotions the

sculptor of the rail period is a great master. *Udayana's* fierce stand with a bow in his hand and the frightened harem, the unfortunately mutilated battle scene, the confusion created by the elephant in the streets of *Rajagrha* are examples of this great capacity of the sculptor, and the poses are the result of great observation and study, the delineation of the subtle variations of human form being perfect. It is sculpture of this period that mainly supplies us with a wealth of details of all aspects of life of the period.

(IV). Fourth Phase : (Ikshvaku – Mahayana Phase 3rd to 4th c AD)

During this phase some additions and alterations must have been made to the *maha-chaitya* during the prosperous rule of the Ikshvaku kings. The drum-slabs showing a representation of stupa with minute carvings belonged to this period when a number of smaller stupas, perhaps votive in character, also came into existence. Significantly, the stupa-reliefs of this period show generally four cross-bars. So far, however, no upright with four mortises has been discovered. It is also clear from different heights of the drum-slabs that they were used not only in the *maha-chaitya* but also in smaller stupa. Further, that the smaller stupas and the harmikas had railings around them is evident from small-sized uprights and cross-bars available in the reserve collection of the Museum.

In this period the figures are sometimes slightly taller and slimmer but on the casing slabs with stupa representations somewhat diminutive in size. Pearl strands are favourite ornaments. The pearl necklace often encircles a shoulder, and in that position it appears natural as if stuck up like that quite by accident and not as if deliberately carved by the sculptor. Now, for the first time, appears the *yajnopavita* all composed of pearls (*muktayajnopavita*). It is a long one and reaches the knee, getting thicker as it proceeds down from the shoulder- The *yajnopavita* occurs on the shoulders of both man and woman. The *udarabandha* sometimes drops its ribbon ends and loops;. Lion head as a motif, which may be seen in later sculptures on armlets, wristlets; crowns and waist zones, occurs here on *the crown of a nagaraja*.

(V) Fifth phase: (Early Pallava to Late Medieval)

The phase spans a period of about a millennium beginning from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries. Without any doubt, *the maha-chaitya* had remained a centre of Buddhism throughout this long

passage of time but its importance showed gradual signs of decline. But there is not much evidence to reconstruct the story of its rise and fall during the period. None the less the post-Ikshvaku period is not entirely barren, for there are sculptures and metal images that may be ascribed to this phase. Datable to the fourth to the sixth centuries AD are a few bronze images of standing Buddha, now in the Government Museum, Madras (Chennai). Soon there ensued a period of full-fledged Mahayanaism as is evident from the limestone sculptures of Tara and other deities.

Though no early monastery or image-shrine has so far been discovered, their existence has to be taken for granted. Several images of Buddha have come to light, and it is difficult to imagine a figure of Buddha without a shrine. Even there must have been several early monasteries; in fact, the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang who visited Dhanyakataka in the second quarter of the seventh century saw '*a crowd of Buddhist monasteries but most of them were deserted, only twenty still remaining in good condition with about a thousand monks, mostly Mahasanghikas.* (H.Sarkar, *Amaravati*, p.17)'

Cudanianimakarika or the crocodile jewel on the head is now a favourite ornament. From this *double-headed makara* has developed the double makara ornament on the face of the crown of the Pallava and Chola periods. Mara now has sometimes a bow in his hand, a feature absent in earlier sculpture. The sculptor of this period is the creator of the complex figure of the dwarf with lion head on his stomach - At the same time at *Ghantasala* a moustached human face is substituted for the lion's head by the sculptor. The finest miniature sculptures in small circular bosses in the friezes and casing slabs are the work of this time.

Some if not all the sculptures of this period are carved on the original early casing slabs- *Dr. Foucher*, has figured a slab carved on both sides in his paper *Less sculptured 'Amaravati'* and explained that earlier slabs were carved again at a later period. There are many other such early slabs carved also on the other side and the famous one given by Burgess as frontispiece in his book is itself one.

There are evidences to show that the *maha-chaitya* complex survived even after the seventh century. On the basis of sculptures alone it is possible to establish clearly that it continued as a centre of Buddhism till about the tenth century AD. These are medieval sculptures of Mahayana affiliation and include images made both in limestone and

granite. Of the granite sculptures, mention may be made of the occurrence of Buddha in *bhumisparsa-mudra*, *Simhanada Avalokitesvara* and *Manjughosha*, now exhibited in the Government Museum, Madras (Chennai). Moreover, the inscriptions of the Kota chiefs from the Amaresvara temple refer to some donations to the *maha-chaitya* during the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD. For instance, an inscription dated to AD 1182 describes the *maha-chaitya* as a very lofty stupa, finely decorated with sculptures (*chaityam-atyunnatam yatra nana-chitra-suchirritam*). Again, an inscription of Dharmakirti, dated to AD 1344, alludes to the repairs to the double-storeyed image-house at Amaravati; the record, however, comes from Gadaladeniya, in District Kandy, Sri Lanka. All these may show that the *maha-chaitya*, with its towering dome, survived almost intact till about the fourteenth century though virtually as a forlorn monument bereft of much of its splendour and pulsating spirit.

CHAPTER - 05

AMARAVATI MUSEUM

The museum presents relics recovered in course of various operations primarily at the maha-chaitya site. It includes some surface collections from the ancient mound at Dharanikota. A few antiquities from some other Buddhist sites in Andhra Pradesh, viz. Gummadidurru and Alluru, in District Krishna, and Lingarajapalli, District Vishakhapatnam, are also exhibited here. Chronologically, the museum collection, mostly in stone, covers largely a period from the third century BC to about the twelfth century AD. A good number of sculptured and architectural pieces, besides the reliquaries discovered from the maha-chaitya and a gold necklace from Gummadidurru, are in the reserve collection. The relic-caskets are five in number—four in the shape of a stupa and the other cylindrical. Inside the caskets were lodged bone-relics and gold flowers. The gold necklace from the stupa-site at Gummadidurru, with 15 beads, including spacers, is a fine specimen of its class. Beads are hollow having been originally filled in with shellac.

5.1. KEY GALLERY :

The gallery displays some of the selected examples of the art-tradition of Amaravati, besides an inscribed relief of Buddha from Gummadidurru. The lotus-medallion, carved on a cross-bar of a railing, is flanked on either side by a dome-slab depicting the *purna-kumbha* or 'ambrosial vase with overflowing foliage and flowers'. Both the slabs carved with *purna-kumbha* were used as veneer to the brick built dome of the stupa. It is an auspicious symbol expressing an idea of fulness and abundance. The ornate entrance to the *pradakshina-patha* is marked by a moon-stone carved with a lotus-design having *purna-kumbha* on either side. The stupa proper shows three out of the four *ayaka*-platforms, the front one surmounted by five pillars symbolizing five main events of Buddha's life. However, the principal object of worship is a *chakra* on a throne, flanked by *chauri* (flywhisk)—bearers and devotees.

There are four panels devoted to the *Mandhata-Jataka*. The king Mandhata waited upon by seven gems—a wheel, an elephant, a horse, a gem, a wife, a house-holder and a minister—intends to conquer the

Trayastrimsa heaven. In two panels are portrayed the story of the Vessantara-Jataka. The other drum-slab depicts a simple stupa, with three-barred rail and ayaka-pillars. Buddha is here symbolized variously as a flaming pillar (agniskandha), and wheel surmounting a pillar, each one placed on a throne, flanked on either side by figures of devotees. There are also two representations of Buddha-pada with umbrella on top

The other drum-slab depicts a simple stupa, with three-barred rail and ayaka-pillars. Buddha is here symbolized variously as a flaming pillar (agniskandha), and wheel surmounting a pillar, each one placed on a throne, flanked on either side by figures of devotees. There are also two representations of Buddha-pada with umbrella on top. Figures and designs on this slab are carved in low relief and appear to be less evolved.

A relief of standing Buddha, in varada-mudra, occupies the eastern wing. Recovered from Gummadiurru, the image, in high relief, stands to a height of 0.96 m. A four-lined inscription, in Sanskrit, engraved on the pedestal is dated to the eighth century AD. It speaks of three generations of Buddhist teachers starting from Acharya Maugalyayana, Acharya Madeva and Sramana Rahula. the last-mentioned disciple being responsible for the gift of the image. On either side of Buddha's feet is carved a deer symbolizing the Deer Park at Samath where Buddha preached his First Sermon. Above the head of the figure is the representation of a seated Buddha protected by a five-headed *Naga Muchalinda*.

5.2. GALLERY-II :

In this the standing life size Buddha image is the typical representation in early period in super human form with marks of greatman (*Mahapurusha Lakshanas*). The couple in round in the Central show case is a master piece of Amaravati art, with full of vigour and vitality, of the Satavahana period. The round panel over a cross bar depicting the episode of Rahula's presentation to the Buddha by his father King Suddhodana is another unique piece in narration, composition and carving. Besides, a few drum slabs and dome slabs depicting the worship of stupa, triratna, animal rows and minor antiquities like coins and beads are interesting.

5.3. GALLERY-III :

In this the exhibits comprise a few sculptures of 2nd Century BCE including a Yakshi of Bharhut tradition, a stele with labeled panels, and a fragmentary pillar edict of Asoka, Image of Buddha from Alluru, Dhammachakra from Lingarajapalli, Bodhisathvas, a dome slab depicting the Three Jewels of the Buddhist order viz., the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha in a panel represented by a Bodhi tree, Dhammachakra and the stupa worshipped by the devotees are noteworthy.

The full size standing ornate bull (*nandisvara*) of the Satavahana period in round is an attractive piece of art picked up from the local Amareswara temple. The garland the bearers on a coping stone, the images of Vajrayana period and Jaina Thirthankara of medieval period are quite interesting in this gallery.

5.4. COURT YARD :

In the Court yard, part from the model of stupa and a part of reconstructed railing, Gautama Siddhartha's departure from his place, return of the horse Kanthaka, episode of Nalagiri the royal elephant of Ajatasathru, worship of Buddha (feet) by the lady devotees, Jataka panels of Mandhata Chaddanta, Vessantara and Losaka are a few attractive panels here.

Earlier forms of Ganesa and Ganesani among the Yakshaganas carrying the garland in earlier period and the panel showing Division of the relics of Lord Buddha by the disputing princes on the coping of the railing are few notable pieces of art.

5.5. MINOR ANTIQUITIES :

In show-case-1, to the south-eastern corner of the entrance to the gallery, are exhibited selected specimens of coins and beads from Dharanikota. Terracotta figurines, pottery and a few miscellaneous objects are on view in show-case 2 in the central part of the gallery.

Coins — A few selected examples of silver punch-marked coins, mostly of the oblong variety, are exhibited here. The period of circulation of these coins in India extends from the sixth century to the second century BC. Symbols, generally five in number on the obverse and one on the reverse, have been punched on each piece. A few coins of the later Satavahana and Ikshvaku kings are also on view.

Beads — Beads, collected mostly from Dharanikota, are variously of stone terracotta, ivory, shell and glass. Semi-precious stones like agate, beryl, camelian, lapislazuli and jasper have been used for preparing beads for necklaces and other ornaments.

Terracottas — Made generally of double-mould, with a hollow interior, these terracotta objects came primarily from the mounds at Dharanikota. Ascribable to the second-third centuries AD, they were used as votive offerings and toy-objects. Of the animal figurines exhibited here, a few have been modelled without any mould and are rather crudely-finished.

Neoliths — Three small neolithic axes, picked up from the surface, are on view here. They were hafted and used as some cutting or scraping tools.

Pottery — The earliest ceramic industry both at the maha-chaitya site and Dharanikota is megalithic Black-and-Red Ware. Then comes the Northern Black Polished (usually abbreviated as N.B.P.) Ware which is generally dated from the sixth to the second centuries B.C. Among the sites in Andhra Pradesh this characteristic pottery with a fine glazed surface is dated to the third-second centuries BC. Both maha-chaitya and Dharanikota have yielded Northern Black Polished Ware. The association of this pottery with the maha-chaitya is significant as it clearly establishes the antiquity of the monument at least to the second century BC, if not earlier. The next datable ceramic industry from the region is the Rouletted Ware, which was introduced into India in the wake of India's favourable balance of trade with the Roman world. Its use faded away by the first-second century AD. In such pottery, which may be partly red and partly black, marks of rouletting is confined, as can be seen from an exhibited sherd, to the inner base alone. Some potsherds of the third-fourth centuries are also displayed: a fragment of such pottery shows a man with folded hands. A few miniature pots, one of them having two perforations, can also be seen. The stupa-site also yielded fragments of Celadon ware, of Chinese origin, datable to the tenth to the thirteenth centuries AD (H.Sarkar, *Amaravati*, p. 28, 29).

CHAPTER - 06

AMARAVATI INSCRIPTIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION :

The Inscriptions are the most reliable sources to know about the Political, Socio-Cultural, Economic & Religious history. It gives the details of Kings, Geneology, Titles, Trade Link, Extent of the Empire, Administration, Religion, Language. The Inscriptions at Amaravati are important to know about the influence of Buddhism in the Krishna valley which date backs to 3rd century BCE to 14th century AD. More than 100 inscription were engraved on different architectural units of the Stupa right from the railing, pillars, copings, cross-bar etc.

The scripts used are of four types : the first is the Asokan Script of about 200 BC. The second is of the 1st century BC or AD. The third variety is found in all the rail inscriptions. The fourth is the ornamental type resembling the Jaggayyapeta script. Most of the Amaravati Inscriptions were written in Sanskrit & Prakrit language..

These Inscriptions were of different types that belongs to different time period. They are as follows :

1. Donatary Inscriptions (donations made by different social groups)
2. Some inscriptions mentions names of King & Royal family
3. Some of them mentions the Architectural features of the Stupa
4. Mentions the names of Monks & Nuns, Upasaka & Upasika
5. Contribution, Repairs & Renovation work made to the stupa
6. Mentions the names of the places
7. Mentions the different Schools of Buddhism

6.2. EPIGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF AMARAVATI :

The earliest Inscription discovered in Amaravati is polished quartzite pillar bearing an Asokan edict. He possibly endowed the *Maha-caitya* with this pillar and a railing of granite uprights. In this act he probably caused the first beautification of the *stupa*. This inscription was found from a resident of Amaravati near the *Mahastupa*. It is important as it reveals the association of King Asoka with this region. Moreover it is known that Asoka was aware of the importance of Dhanyakaṭaka in *Dakṣinapatha*.

Some inscriptions and coins of the region provide the names of few local rulers reigning during 2nd-1st Century B.C.E. A granite upright contains an inscription of Kumara Avatakama and another inscription on a limestone coping to Raja Kumariya Sammaliya in early Brahmi characters of 2nd-1st Century BCE. An inscription mentions Sivamaka Sada states donations by *panigharika* or superintendent of drinking / water house.

The epigraphical records of Vasiṣṭhiputra Puḷumavi and Gautamiputra Yajna Satakarṇi confirm that this region was under the control of the Satavahanas. Puḷumavi was the contemporary of Nagarjuna who built a railing around the *Maha-caitya*. An Inscription of Vasiṣṭhiputra Pulumavi records that the gift of Wheel of Law (*dharmachakra*) at the western gate of the *maha-chaithya*. In his regime the monument began to be refurbished and rebuilt. A donatory inscription in Sanskrit that belongs to the reign of Gautamiputra Sri Yajna (Satakarṇi) and does not refer to any direct involvement of the king. But we get the information that the *Maha-chaitya* was highly venerated and donee came from Ujjain.

In the record of early Pallava king Sivaskandavarman, Dhanyakāṭaka is referred as the vice regal city. Sivaskandavarman issued a copper plate grant (Mayidavolu) to his father's governor at Dhānyakāṭaka requesting him to give a village named Viripara as grant to the *Brahmaṇas*.

The name of Amaravati appears in the epigraph of 9th century CE. The Tadikonda inscription of Amma Raja II clearly mentions the name of Amaravati. It is interesting to note that although the inscription has been found from the Amresvara temple, it mentions Buddha and *Maha-caitya* which was in worship during that time and was decorated with sculptures. The epigraph also talks about Koṭa Keṭaraja who is also known as the lord of the district of 6000 villages, that is *Shaṭsahasravani*.

A much later epigraph dated 1182 C.E by Keta II on the pillar of Amresvara mentions the lofty *chaitya* very close to it. It was well decorated with various sculptures (*Chaityamatynnatanyatra nana chitra suchitritam*). The inscriptions of the Kota (Keta) chiefs from the Amaresvara temple refer to some donations to the *Maha-chaithya* during the 1234 CE. Here the doner is Bayyamāmba Mahādevī (line216), daughter of Rudradeva Maharaja. She was one of the wives of Keṭa-II. It

is stated that she donated a lamp to Buddha, the Lord who resided at Śrī Dhanyaghaṭi.

An Inscription of Dharmakirti, dated to 1344, alludes to the repairs to the double-storeyed image-house at Amaravati; the record, however, comes from Gadadeniya, in Kandy, Sri Lanka. All these may show that the *Maha-chaithya*, survived almost intact till about 14th century AD.

6.3. DONATIVE INSCRIPTIONS :

Many householders, along with their wives, sons, daughters, friends and relatives have donated for a pillar, for a cross-bar an *abatamala* casing slab. Some have made their offerings but mostly these meritorious gifts are gifts of great devotees who hoped thus to please the Lord. Donations were made by different social groups sometimes a great banker or a merchant, the wife of a caravan leader, sometimes all the townsfolk made the donation. The length of the railing coping, the type of carved slab as for instance a slab with an overflowing vessel are all mentioned. Some of the inscriptions recorded that the gift was set up at the base, or at the gates, of the *Maha-chaithya*.

Some Important Donative Inscriptions are as follows :

No. 01

Text:-

- i) [Si] dham Rāno Vasiṣṭhiputasa Sāmi Siri Pulumāvisa savachharampiṇḍasutariyānan
.... Kahutaragahapatisa Purigahapatisa chaputasa Isilasa sabhakutasa.
- ii) sa (bha) ginikasa bhayāya chasa Nākanikāya Saputakasa.....[Bhagava] to
mahāchetiye chetakiyā naṃ mikā [ya] sa parigahe aparāḍāre dhamachaka de dhamman
[mātā] pitu [udisā]

This Inscription refers to the gift of a *Dharmachakra* (Wheel of law) on the western gateway in the great *Caitya* of Bhagavat (Buddha) during the time of Vasiṣṭhiputra Pulumavi (130-59 AD) with two Piṇḍasutris, the *gahapati* Kahutara and Isila, the son of the *gahapati* Puri, with his brother, his sister, his wife, Nāganikā with their son.

No. 02

Text:-

.... gahapatisa Maditisa duhutuya Uvasikāya sangha-Rakhitaya sabhasakāya, Sabhagirinaya,
tina ka putanacha Dāsa, Ajunasa cha Dāsa ghasa, bhatiyāna

This inscription gives information that a donation was made by *Gahapati* Maditi's daughter Urvāsika, Sangh-Rakshitā Sabhāsakā, (and) Sabhagirinā, together with their sons and slave Sangha.

No. 03

Text:-

Sidham namo bhagavato Vijayapuravathavasa Cada Vaniyiniya Sidhya... sa-Patithavita

This inscription makes reference of gift (coping) of merchant's (*Vāṇīya*) wife Sidhi of Vijayapurī.

No. 04

Text:-

- i) *Sidham rājno Gotamipu (trasya) Śrī Yajna (sā) ta karnisya Samvatsara-vasa-pa -5 divasa 8 uijjayinī upāsakena*
- ii) *Jayilena-mahācetiye-karitam*
- iii) *Dhanakata cetiya*

The inscription is in Sanskrit and belongs to the reign of Gautamīputra Śrī Yajna (Sātakarṇi) and does not refer to any direct involvement of the king. But we definitely get the information that the *Mahācaitya* was highly venerated and donee came from Ujjain.

No. 05

Text:-

- i) *Rājalekhakasa Bala*
- ii) *sajāyāya Somadatā*

This inscription mentions the wife of *rāja lekhaka* or royal scribe Bala who patronized Buddhism.

No. 06

Text:-

- i) *Sidham camakarasa Nāgaupajhayaputasa Vidhikasa samatukasa saphayakasa sabhātukasa putasa ca Nagasa samadhu tukasa sanati mitab aṃdhavasa deyadhamma*
- ii) *Punaghaṭakapaṭo*

Meritorious gift of a slab with an overflowing vase by the leather worker (*cāmakara*) Vidhika, the son of the teacher Nāga, with his mother, his wife, his brothers, his son Nāga, his daughters and with his *jnātris*.

No. 07

Text:-

- i) *Sidham Jetaparavanavathavaya pavajitikaya sagharakhitāya bālikaya ja*
- ii) *pavajitikaya Haghaya Kumarikāya ja Yavaya dāna deyadhama upato*

This inscription is interesting as it states the tender age of the donors that is *balikāya* and *kumāri*. It refers to females having children who have joined the order and are making donations. It refers to donation by Saṅgharakṣitā along with her nun daughters Hamghā and by her nun Yavā.

No. 08

Text:-

- i) *Damila Kanhasa bhātunam ca Culakanhasa Nakhaya ca Dhanamahace*
- ii) *tiyapādamūle Udhampaṭo*

The *stūpa* of Amarāvātī received donations from the people of Damila which probably refers to the Tamil country.

No. 09

Text:-

Sidham Kudūra nivāsikasa bhayata Nāgasa atevāsikasa dahara bhikhusa Vidhikasa ate vāsiniya ca Budharakhitaya natiya ca Cūta Vubharakhitaya ca Utarāyake paṭodāna

This is an important inscription as it refers to Kudura/Koddura which is mentioned by Ptolemy as an important port town in the Maisolia region. It is generally identified with Kodura in the Divi Taluk of Kṛṣṇā district.

No. 10

Text:-

tasa Likhitasa thambo bhi(khu) dāna paṭalitate

This inscription mentions that Pillar of Likhita a monk from Paṭaliputra.

No. 11

Text:-

Theresa Chetiyavada kasa Bhayata Budhino, Bhaginiya Budhaya-cha-dāna deya dhama siha-thāna

Pious gift of a lion pedestal of Thera Bhayata Budhi, the enlarger of the *caitya* and of his sister the nun Budha.

No. 12

Text:-

*Vāniyiniyā Nakacampakiyā cadasirisa-Siri
Dhanika saṭha nikāya Budhilaya ca
dhana dhanam Unhisinihi nivide magasa hetukanantana*

From this inscription we derive the information that a merchant's wife of the name Nakacampaki donated a coping stone with Cadaśirī and Siri, the wife of a rich caravan Trader. (Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology*, p. 201 to 216)

From the inscriptions from Amaravati it can be clearly seen that the donors came from Ujjain, Paṭaliputra, Vijayapura, Ghaṇṭasala and Dhanyakaṭaka. Arrival from the neighbouring region as well as from distant places also suggests popularity of the *maha-chaitya* and the religious complex attached to it. Some other place names are found in the inscriptions whose location is unknown. These are found in the votive records. They are Amsutalika, Akhsavada, Mandara, Kavuruara, Sethivadicha, Valikacha, Sirinagica, Dhanagiri, Chadakica etc.

The donative inscriptions from Amaravati also display a wide range of patronage. These included *gahapatis*, *vaṇiyas* (merchants) caravan traders (*Sarthavahas*) bankers (*heraṇikas*), lay worshippers (*upasakas* and *upasikas*), royal officers (*Paniyagharika*, *raja lekhaka*), monks and nuns and members of the royal family. In addition to these the donations of social groups associated with different craft specialization (*Cāmakara*, *Gandhikā*, *Pasanikā*) reveal collective patronage.

6.4. IMPORTANT NAMES MENTIONED IN INSCRIPTIONS :

The Inscriptions mentions the different Schools of Buddhism in Amaravati such as *Cetikiyas*, *Rajagirikas*, *Siddhathakas*, *Pubbaseliyas* & *Avaraseliyas* are named. It also mentions donars as monks as *bhadata*, elders as *thera*, mendicants as *pendapalika*, worthy men as *aya*, male and female worshippers as *uvasaka* & *uvasika*, disciples male and female as *atevasika* & *astevasikini*, official as *vyaprita*, preachers of the law as *dhamakathika*, supervisors of renovation works as *navakamaka*, householders as *gahapati*, housewives as *gharani*, generals as *senagopa*, perfumers as *gadhika*, leather workers as *camakara* and whole towns as *negama* (C Sivaramamurti, p. 272).

It is interesting to note that the material prosperity of the *gahapatīs* is also proved not only by their donations but by the nature of donations, that is, architectural structures in the form of pillars, upright slabs, slabs with footprints, railings, coping stone, cross bars, slabs with *pūrṇaghaṭas*, *dharmachakra*, lotus medallion, lotus medallion and ornamented rail pillar.

Names of the Kings & Royal Family Inscribed are :

1. Vasishthiputra Pulumavi
2. Siva Sri Satakarni
3. Sivaskanda Sastakarni
4. Gautamiputra Yajna Satakarni
5. Raja Kumariya Sammaliya
6. Siri Sivamaka Sada
7. Ammaraja – II
8. Kota Keta – II
9. Yuvamaharaja Sivaskandavarman
10. Simhavarman – II
11. Queen Naganika (wife of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi)
12. Bala (wife of Rajalekhaka Somadata)
13. Princes Siri Campapura
14. Gotami
15. Bayyamamba Mahadevi (daughter of Rudhradeva Maharaja)

Names of the Places Inscribed are :

1. Ujjain
2. Kanchipuram
3. Dhamnakataka
4. Vijayapuri (Nagarjunakonda)
5. Damila (Tamil Country)
6. Rajagiri
7. Kudura (Koddura)
8. Pataliputra
9. Kantakasila (Ghantasala)
10. Rajasaila (Rayasela)
11. Narasala
12. Dhanagiri
13. Viripala
14. Amrutalika
15. Jetaparavana

Names of the Donors Inscribed :

1. Isila
2. Jayila (from Ujjain)
3. Himala
4. Urvasika
5. Campaki Cadasiri
6. Prolama Devi
7. Gotami
8. Sangarakhita
9. Nagamita
10. Budharakhita

CHAPTER – 07

CONCLUSION

7.1. SUMMARY :

The Buddhist monument of Amaravati is one of the finest masterpieces of the Buddhist world displaying great creativity and skills of the artists. Among several Buddhist art centres of Andhra archaeology, Amaravati became the most significant centre. The ornate Amaravati art though touched by the Sunga art traditions of North India gradually evolved its own art style which it diffused to the adjacent sites. As a result the whole group of art centres of early Andhra-desa was singularly designated by the term 'Amaravati School of Art'. Besides Amaravati's role in the evolution of early Andhra's distinctive artistic identity, Amaravati Maha-caitya enjoyed the greatest longevity in comparison to other sites of early Andhra archaeology.

The Maha-caitya at Amaravati retained its pre-eminent position from 4th century B.C.E to 14th century C.E. It was a major center for Buddhist learning and pilgrimage, attracting monks and scholars from various regions. This made it a hub for the exchange of religious and philosophical ideas. Excavations at the site have unearthed a wealth of artifacts, inscriptions, and relics, contributing significantly to our understanding of early Buddhist practices and the socio-cultural context of the time.

It may be assumed that having the benefits of rich agrarian base, flourishing domestic and international trade network and religious supremacy it was chosen as a fitting capital and megacity of political authorities in early Andhradeśa. The plastic advancement of the Amarāvātī art may be attributed to this strategic significance of the region which possibly attracted the most efficient craftsmen to the area. Thus Amarāvātī attained a premiere position in coastal Andhra throbbing politically, economically and spiritually. In fact Amarāvātī, ancient Dhānyakaṭaka became such a significant centre in coastal Andhra that it paved the way for the cultural development of early Andhradeśa.

Dominated by Buddhist philosophy, many of these urban centres bear proof of beautiful Buddhist art and architecture. Among them the Buddhist art of Amarāvātī visible in the Mahācaitya of huge stature exhibited an unparalleled confidence in ornamentation and maturity that surpassed other sites of Andhradeśa. The matured linearism, ornamentation and love for details became more pronounced than its neighbouring sites. In fact the great stūpa of Amarāvātī became the glory of Indian Buddhism which attracted pilgrims from India and abroad.

Amaravati holds a rich collection of ancient Indian art and architecture. The detailed carvings and sculptures discovered in the city's ruins showcase the impressive skills and creativity of the talented craftsmen who lived here long ago. Amaravati's art mainly focuses on depicting the life and teachings of Lord Buddha, along with various mythical and storytelling scenes. The sculptures in Amaravati are renowned for their lifelike qualities and intricate craftsmanship. The sculptors possessed an in-depth knowledge of human anatomy and emotions, which is clearly visible in their realistic portrayals of Buddha and other characters. Often, the art displayed a harmonious fusion of Indian and Greco-Roman styles, reflecting the cultural exchanges facilitated by trade and diplomacy. One of the standout features is the intricate carvings on the gateways of the Great Stupa, known as "toranas." These gateways tell stories from Buddha's life, his previous lives, and various Jataka tales. The level of detail and the sheer number of sculptures adorning the gateways are truly impressive.

To summarise the work, it has been divided into 7 chapters for the purpose of detailed study. First chapter gives details of the Buddhism in India. It originated around 5th century BCE in the Magadha region and it spread throughout India during the period of Asoka the great. After the death of Buddha, the religion divided into many schools such as Dharmaguptakas, Mahīśāsakas, Kāśyapīyas, Sarvāstivādins, and the Mahāsāṃghikas. Four Buddhist councils were held to solve the internal disputes among monks at different period. Asoka took several measures to spread Buddha's teachings allover India. Later Kanishka also followed the same tradition to spread Buddhism. Buddhism continued to flourish in India during the Gupta empire. Gupta ruler such as Kumaragupta-I (414-455 AD) supported Buddhism. Chinese travellers Hiuen Tsang and

Fahien visited India during this period . After Guptas Harshavardhan and Palas supported Buddhism in India, they gave large donations to Buddhist Sangha. After their fall the royal patronage to Buddhism declined. Islamic invasion during 12th century gave final blow to Buddhism in India.

The second chapter gives details of origin and development of Buddhist architecture in India. The Buddhist architecture is classified into two types i.e Structural and Rock-cut architecture. Structural architecture includes Stupas, Viharas, and Chaithyas. Stupa was first built during the period of Ajatasatru. Later during the reign of Asoka about 84000 Stupas were built across India. The Rock-Cut architecture also began during this time. Later Satavahanas, Ikshvakus, Gupta's, Vakatakas, early Pallavas patronised Buddhism. They repaired and renovated the Stupas by enlarging them.

Third chapter informs about the Buddhism in South India with special reference to Andhra Pradesh. The Buddhist Architecture in Andhra Pradesh is represented by the Rock-cut caves and brick and stone built Stupas, Chaityas, Viharas and Silamandapas. The post-Asokan phase extending for two or three centuries witnessed a phenomenal growth of monastic institutions in Andhra-desa. Satavahana rulers are also made remarkable contribution for the development of Buddhist Art and Architecture between the first century BC and third century AD. Numerous Stupas were built along the River Krishna in the south east India including the sites of Amravati and Nagarjunakonda in the Guntur district and Jaggayyapeta, Ghantasala, Gudivada and Bhattiprolu in Krishna district. The Amaravati style of sculpture is also influenced architectural development in South Asian region. Ashokan Stupas were enlarged the earlier bricks and woodworks being replaced with stone works the most famous of this monuments are the stupas at Amravati and Nagarjunakonda.

The Fourth Chapter gives description of the Stupa which largest in the Andhra country. The efforts of Archaeologist who strives their best bring Amaravati into light is mentioned in this chapter. The Maha Chaithya was survived here from Ashokan period and reached peak during Satavahanas. Huien Thsang's reference to Dhanayakataka suggests the importance of Amaravati in South India. The Stupa here was built during Ashokan period, later during Satavahas it was enlarged by adding Ornamental decorations, Railing, Narrative sculptures of

Jataka stories. Ikshvakus and Early Pallavas are also patronised here. Later the royal patronage to Buddhism declined. Donations were made by Kota chiefs, Vijayanagara Rulers, Reddis to the Mahachaitya. It was survived till 14th century.

Fifth chapter informs about the Archaeological Museum at Amaravati. This chapter discusses about the various Artefacts, Coins, Inscriptions, Beads, Pottery, Antiquities recovered during the excavations. The description of Galleries were given in this chapter. The sculptures from Amaravati, Jaggayyapeta, Alluru are preserved here. Dome slabs, Drum slabs, Narrative sculptures of Jataka stories, Ashokan edict, Buddha image, Dhammachakra are attractive and preserved in this Museum.

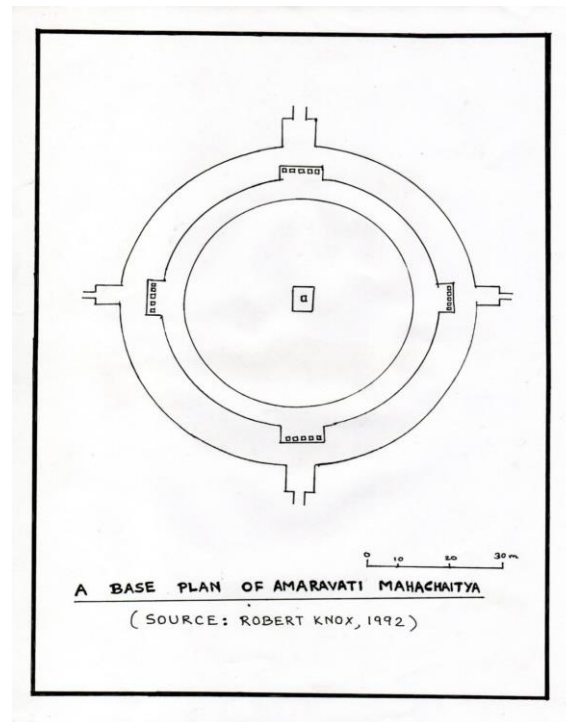
Sixth chapter discusses about the Inscriptions that are discovered in Amaravati. It gives information of Donations made to stupa, Names of Kings, Places, Monks & Nuns, Gifts, Architectural features of the Stupa, Donors who came from different parts of the country, different schools of Buddhism that were flourished in the Amaravati Region. Based on this Socio-cultural, Economic, Political, Architectural History of Amaravati is reconstructed.

Chapter Seventh is the concluding part that includes the whole summary of the present work that gives details about glorious history of Amaravati. It can be postulated that the Art of Amaravati greatly contributed to the development and enrichment of Art tradition in India, Srilanka and South East Asia. Thus from the entire study it may be stated without hesitation that the glory of stupa Art and Architecture is greatly reflected in the massive Mahachaitya of Amaravati. Such a magnificent monument naturally encourages Scholars and Researchers to carry imposing studies on the subject.

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MAPS & PLAN DRAWINGS OF THE STUPA



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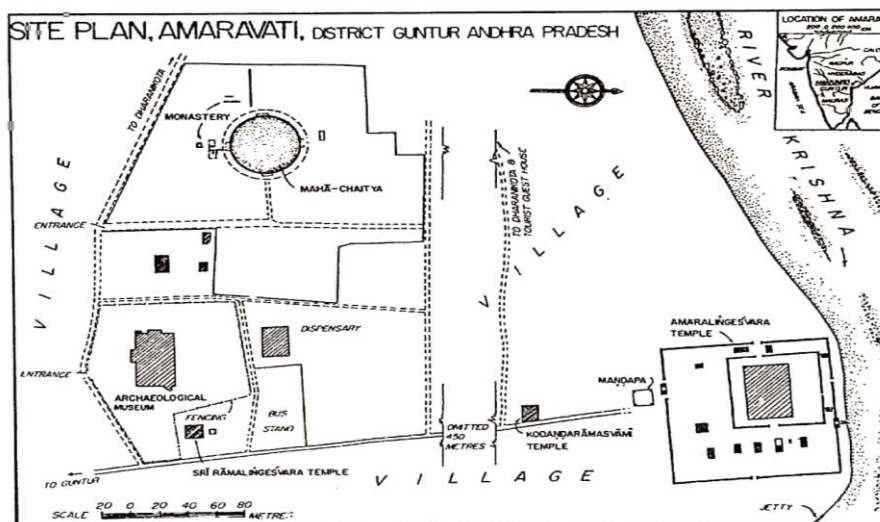
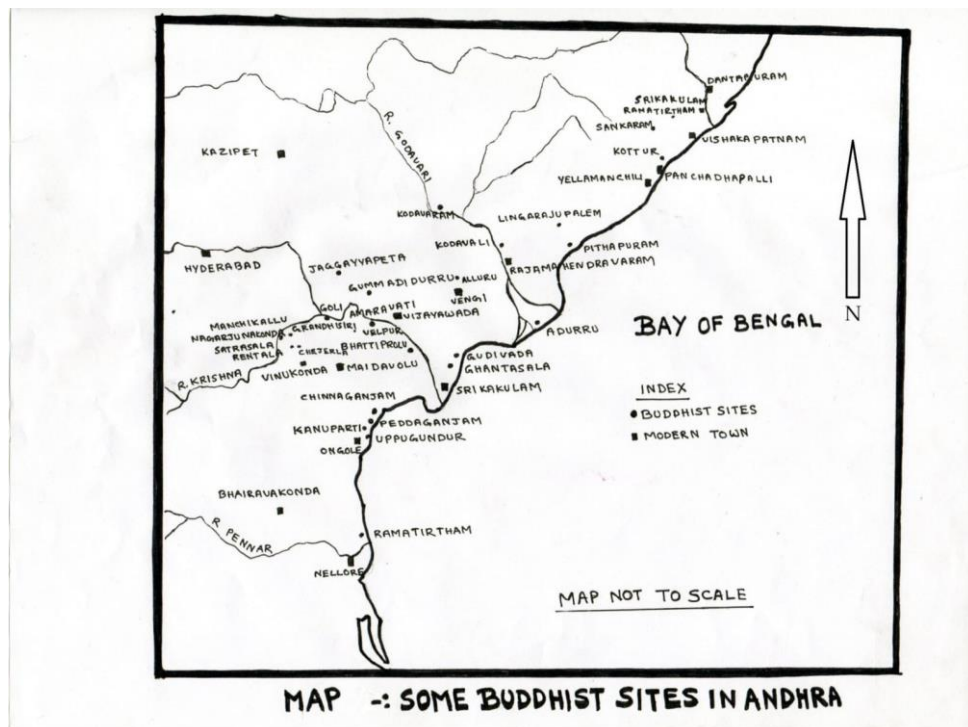
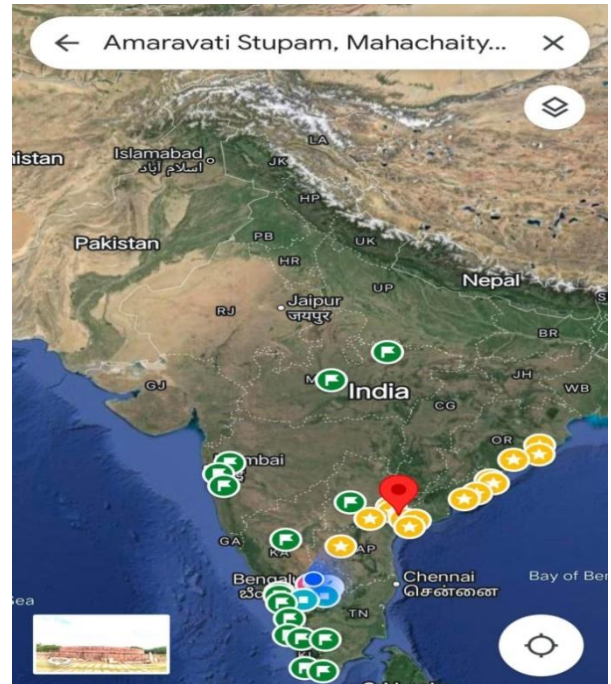
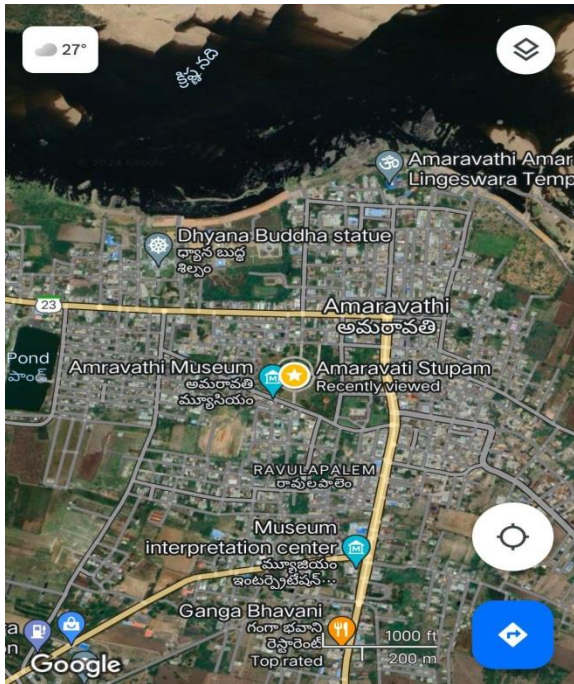


PLATE IX

DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATIONS

Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (fig. 1,2)



Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (fig. 3,4,5)



Fig. 6. The Amaravati Mahachaithya site at present



Fig. 7. Railings with crossbar at stupa site



Fig. 8. Reconstructed Railing of Amaravati Mahastupa, Archaeological Museum, Amaravati



Fig. 9. Drum slab at Amaravati Museum

Fig.10. A Crossbar of a Railing belongs to 1st or 2nd century AD

Fig. 11. Dome slab with Purnakumbha belongs to 1st or 2nd century

Fig. 12. Buddha Sculpture from Gmmadidduru – 8th century AD



Pl. 13c : Sarvamdadavadana, Amaravati,
Archaeological Museum, Amaravati



Pl. 13d : Sarvamdadavadana, Nagarjunakonda,
Archaeological Museum, Nagarjunakonda



Pl 43c : Yakshi, Amaravati ,
Archaeological Museum , Amaravati



Pl. 13b : Bodhisattva Maitreya, Amaravati,
Archaeological Museum, Amaravati

Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (Fig. 13, 14, 15, 16)



- Fig. 17. Dhammachakra from Lingarajapalli – 3rd century AD
 Fig. 18. Crossbar with presentation scene of Rahula to Buddha (1st or 2nd c. AD)
 Fig. 19. Dome slab from Gummadidduru – 3rd century AD
 Fig. 20. Image of Buddha belongs to 1st – 2nd century AD



Pl. 30a : Amresvara Temple, Amaravati



Pl. 30b : Fragment of Mauryan Pillar inscription, Amaravati, Archaeological Museum , Amaravati



Pl. 30c : Northern Black Polished Ware, Amaravati , Archaeological Museum , Amaravati

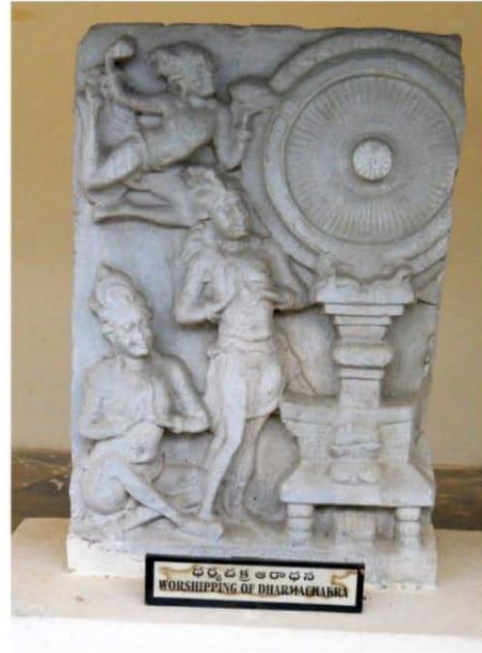


Pl. 30d : Elephant below the palm tree
(source : S.S. Gupta, 2008)

Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (Fig. 21, 22, 23, 24)



Pl. 27a : Buddha's Mahaparinirvana, Amaravati ,
Archaeological Museum , Amaravati



Pl. 27b : Worship of Dharmachakra, Amaravati ,
Archaeological Museum , Amaravati



Pl. 27c : Depiction of Buddha as Agniskanda, Amaravati,
Archaeological Museum, Amaravati



Pl. 27d : Depiction of Buddhapada, Amaravati,
Archaeological Museum, Amaravati

Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (Fig. 25, 26, 27, 28)



Pl. 37a : Makara, Amaravati,
Madras Government Museum, Chennai
(Source : C. Sivaramamurti, 1956)



Pl 37b : Winged deer, Amaravati,
Madras Government Museum, Chennai
(Source : R. Kannar, 2014)



Pl 37c : Winged deer, Sanchi Stupa 1, North Torana



Pl 37d : Depiction of Naga muchalinda, Amaravati ,
Archaeological Museum , Amaravati

Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (Fig. 29, 30, 31, 32)



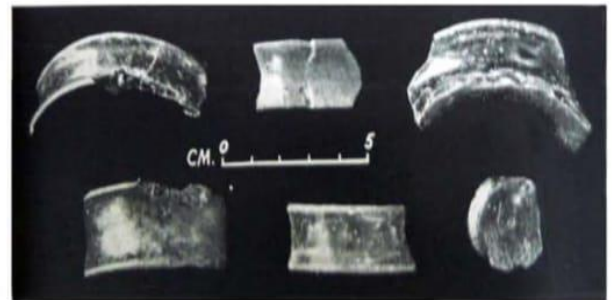
Pl. 32a : Roman amphorae, Amaravati ,
Archaeological Museum , Amaravati



Pl. 32b : Lead coins of Vasisthiputra Pulumavi
(Source : R. Knox, 1992)



Pl. 32c : Terracotta figurines, Amaravati ,
Archaeological Museum , Amaravati



Pl. 32d : Glass bangles
(source : Indian Archaeology - A Review, 1964-65)

Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (Fig. 33, 34, 35, 36)



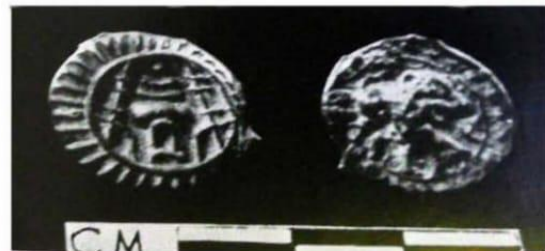
Pl.31a : The inscription which makes reference of the superintendent of water house of Sivamaka Sada. (source : R. Kannan, 2008)



Pl.31b : Lead coins of Satavahanas, Amaravati, Archaeological Museum, Amaravati



Pl. 31c : Inscription reads Gotaminamo...danam. (source : R. Kannan 2014)



Pl. 31d : Visnukundin coins, Amaravati, (source Indian Archaeology - A Review 1973-74)

Source: Sreyashi Ray Chawdhuri, *Amaravati Art in the Context of Andhra Archaeology* (Kolkata, 2018) (Fig. 37, 38, 39, 40)